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**Austin 1996**



**THE  
TEMPLE  
CLASSICS**



**THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE**

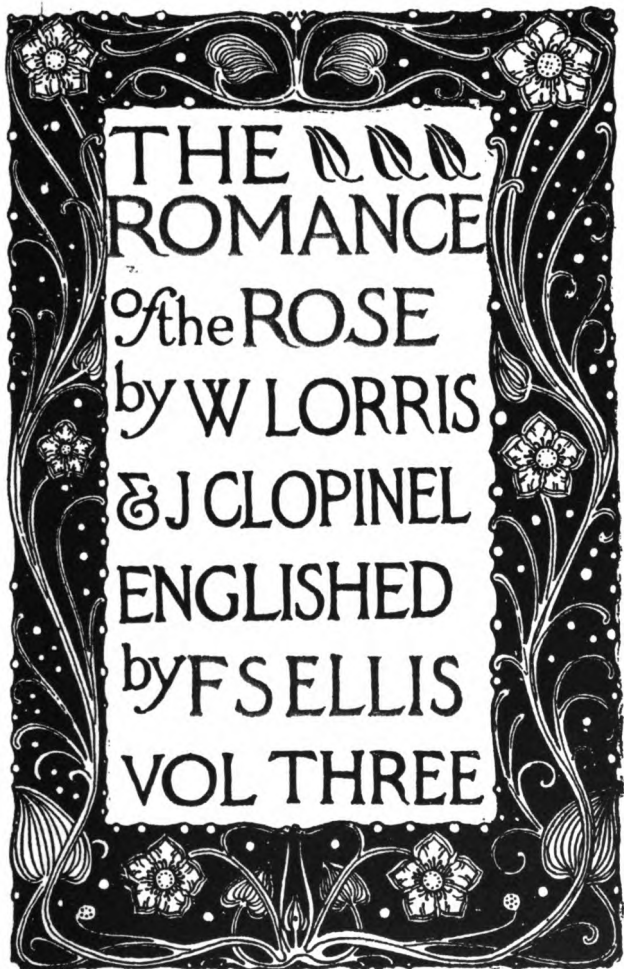
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## SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS IN VOLUME III

The Duenna tells the Lover that she will leave the postern gate open by which he may enter. For that service he promises her a piece of fine blue or green cloth. He enters the enclosure and sees the God of Love leading the Barons to his aid. Though False-Seeming and Hypocrisy are among the host, he is content, so long as they fight for him. He is rejoiced to behold Sweet-Looks once again, who points out Fair-Welcome to him.

Cap.  
LXXVI.  
F. 15308-  
15378.

Fair-Welcome thanks the Lover for the chaplet, and declares himself at his service, to which declaration he gets a complaisant reply, and then the Lover, saying that to possess the Rose is his one desire, advances towards it.

Cap.  
LXXVII.  
F. 15379-  
15428.

But no sooner does he approach the Rosebush than forth starts Danger and bids him fly as he values his life. Fear and Shame come to the aid of Danger, and all three load Fair-Welcome and his companion with abuse. The Lover is driven from the tower, and Fair-Welcome is secured with a triple lock.

Cap.  
LXXVIII.  
F. 15429-  
15558.

vi      **SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS**

Cap.  
LXXIX.  
F. 15559-  
15698.

The Lover is overcome with grief at the fate of Fair-Welcome, and implores that he may share his prison. Danger, Fear, and Shame laugh at his proposal, for which they reproach him roundly. Thereupon he calls with a feeble voice on the Barons of Love's host, whom he has seen approaching, to come to his assistance.

Cap.  
LXXX.  
F. 15699-  
15758.

The Barons call to arms, and the Lover declares that but for their timely arrival he would assuredly have been killed.

Cap.  
LXXXI.  
F. 15759-  
15786.

The Author begs his readers to bear with him, both as to what he has already written, and proposes further to write, concerning the art of love.

Cap.  
LXXXII.  
F. 15787-  
15824.

He asks the pardon of lovers if he makes use of some words or phrases which are displeasing to them.

Cap.  
LXXXIII.  
F. 15825-  
15934.

He trusts also that dames and damosels, whether they have lovers or not, will believe that he has no ill-feeling towards their sex, notwithstanding that which he has written already or shall write hereafter. He says no more, he avers, than may be found in writers of old days. His arrows, he asserts, are but directed against evil-doers. Lastly, should anything that he has written give offence to Holy Church, he is willing at once to submit himself and make amends.

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS vii

The Author here takes up the thread of his story. Franchise engages in single combat with Danger, and is nearly overcome by him when Pity rushes to her aid: Shame appears to the rescue and puts Pity to flight, though she is aided by Pleasure; but Shame in her turn is discomfited by Hide-Well.

Cap.  
LXXXIV.  
F. 15935-  
16146.

Fear, ordinarily so faint of heart, overcomes Hide-Well and gets the better of Audacity, whom he has called to his assistance. But she is forthwith engaged in mortal combat with Surety.

Cap.  
LXXXV.  
F. 16147-  
16247.

The God of Love, seeing that his Barons are in danger of defeat, dispatches Franchise and Sweet-Looks to summon his mother, the sworn enemy of Chastity, to come to their aid. A truce is proclaimed meanwhile.

Cap.  
LXXXVI.  
F. 16248-  
16302.

The envoys proceed to Cythera, where they find Venus engaged with Adonis in following the chase.

Cap.  
LXXXVII.  
F. 16303-  
16346.

Venus eloquently implores Adonis to hunt only such quarries as may not do him injury. The death of Adonis is told. Venus declares herself ready to put Jealousy to the rout.

Cap.  
LXXXVIII.  
F. 16347-  
16430.

The Goddess of Love bids her attendants yoke eight doves to her car, and hastens to her son's aid, who had already broken the truce.

Cap.  
LXXXIX.  
F. 16431-  
16456.

viii      **SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS**

Cap. XC.  
F. 16457-  
1655a.

The Barons make grand preparations for the siege of the castle. Venus addresses her son, and bids him swear his men to fealty. In default of the relics of saints they make vows to conquer or die, on their bows, arrows, quivers, and other arms.

Cap. XCI.  
F. 16551-  
1685a.

When this oath is sworn, Nature enters her workshop, where she ever occupies herself for furthering generation, whether of man or the lower animals, thereby combating Death, who seeks by killing individuals to destroy all life. Art strives to imitate Nature, but is only a bungler, for he cannot endow his work with animation. In sculpture, carving, painting, or alchemy alike, he falls short of Nature's work. The most skilful artist is powerless to impart feeling or speech to his creations. The alchemist, for all his study, vies but ineffectually with the operations of Nature. The greatest masters and philosophers must acknowledge themselves but feeble in her presence.

Cap. XCII.  
F. 16851-  
1695a.

The great painter Zeuxis confessed himself unable by his art to equal the forms of the five fair damsels who displayed to him all the perfections of their bodies that he might thence paint a picture for the temple of Venus. When God created Nature he made in her the source and fountain of all beauty, such as human hands can never attain to. Nature laments that she has committed one great fault, of which she will disburden her mind at full to her priest, Genius.

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS ix

Nature declares the remorse she feels for having bestowed being upon man, who continually transgresses her laws. Genius expresses his willingness to hear her confession, but then, without any apparent occasion or excuse, launches forth into a long tirade against women, and dilates specially on their inability to keep counsel.

Cap. XCIII.  
F. 16955-  
17062

Genius continues his discourse against women in form of a debate betwixt husband and wife.

Cap. XCIV  
F. 17063-  
17220.

Genius continues in the same strain, and, when he has finished his tirade, declares himself ready to hear the confession which Nature desires to pour into his ear, and which the Author avows his intention of recording word for word.

Cap. XCV  
F. 17221-  
17412.

Nature falls on her knees and begins her confession. It is an exposition of Jean de Meun's apprehension of cosmogony, astronomy, and optics. When God created all things he appointed Nature his chamberlain. Natural phenomena of the earth and heavens are quaintly and naïvely illustrated. Man cannot escape death, but may shorten his days by folly, or somewhat prolong them by reasonable living.

Cap. XCVI.  
F. 17413-  
17724.

Empedocles and Origen both were guilty of outrages against Nature's laws, the one in seeking death, the other in mutilating himself. A long discussion follows on Freewill, Necessity, and Destiny.

C. XCVII.  
F. 17725-  
18300.

x      **SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS**

C. XCVIII.  
F. 18301-  
19296.

How Deucalion and Pyrrha restored the human race. If men could foresee the future as those two foresaw the flood they might make provision against famines, whether caused by extreme heat, storms, floods, or droughts. If the brute creation had more intelligence, how grievous would then be man's estate. The folly of seeking to know too much is illustrated by the story of Vulcan's discovery of his wife's amour with Mars. A discourse on optics, mirrors, visions, and dreams follows, with a curious folk-lore discussion on the power of the spirit to leave the body and return to it during sleep. The heavens do not trouble themselves to announce the deaths of kings by portents any more than they do those of common people, and have no more effect on the one than on the other. Kings, forsooth, resemble pictures, in that they are better seen from a distance than looked at too closely. ✓

Cap. XCIX.  
F. 19297-  
20028.

Should any one, priding himself on his lineage and ancestry, ask whether those who are of such noble birth as to be entitled to carry arms should not be considered of more importance than mere tillers of the earth, Nature would flatly answer: ✓ No. Men are to be valued and esteemed only for their virtue and nobility of heart. Clerks, who have given themselves to study, have great advantages over other men; but if, notwithstanding the knowledge they have acquired, they love vice and neglect virtue, proportionably great shall be their punishment. In old times poets and men of letters were nobly rewarded, as



## SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS xi

witness the examples of Virgil, of Ennius, and of others. Far different, alas! is it in these days. Nature has no cause to complain of the elements, nor of plants, nor of beasts, nor of insects—all fulfil her laws after their different kinds. 'Tis man, man only, formed by Nature in the image of her Master, her last and most glorious work, who sets her at nought and despises her commands. Man it was who put to death his Creator, whose human birth had been foretold by Virgil and by Albumasar. A denunciation of man's wickedness follows, and a description of the punishments which therefore await him.

Nature deposes her priest Genius to visit the army, and engage Venus and the Barons of the host in her service. False-Seeming and Constrained-Abstinence she much dislikes, yet fears they are necessary evils. Genius then divests himself of his chasuble and rochet and takes wings to fly to the host.

Cap. C  
F. 20029-  
20136.

Nature re-enters her smithy, and sets to work at her forge. Genius arrives at the host, and is invested by the God of Love with chasuble, ring, crozier, and mitre. He thereupon mounts a stage, whence he may harangue the assembly.

Cap. CI.  
F. 20137-  
20206.

Genius delivers his exhortation, which is neither more nor less than an earnest and vigorous exhortation to fecundity.

Cap. CII.  
F. 20207-  
20408.

Genius continues his discourse, which becomes a strange medley of ideas. He exhorts the

Cap. CIII.  
F. 20409-  
20806.

## xii SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

Barons that the great work of man's life is to repair the gaps made in the human race by the shears of Atropos. If men do their duty in this respect they shall be received into the flower-decked meadows of paradise, where the Lamb of God leads his chosen flock through pleasant pastures. There reigns day eternal and perpetual spring, more sweet and perfect than that which ruled on earth in the days of Saturn.

Cap. CIV.  
F. 20807-  
21428.

Genius continues his discourse in the same strain, and insists on the fact that the paradise he now describes, and promises to those who follow his behest, exceeds, beyond power of words to tell, the Garden of the Rose as described by the Lover in the opening of the poem,

Cap.  
CV.-CIX.  
F. 21429-  
22608.

Venus directs the attack on the tower, which falls before her potent leadership. [The remainder of the poem, in which the story of Pygmalion and the image is introduced, is mixed with a symbolism which certainly could not be put into English without giving reasonable offence, and the translator has therefore had the hardihood to bring the story to a conclusion by an invention of his own. Whether he is to be pardoned for so doing, apart from any defect in his work, those will be the most competent judges who take the trouble to read the original, which is given by way of appendix.]

# THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

## LXXVI

Herein doth the Duenna teach  
The Lover means by which to reach 15410  
His end, and, whispering, doth relate  
How he may pass the postern gate.  
And good her lesson proved to be,  
For soon he entered secretly.

THE safer entry will you find,  
Quoth she, through that low door behind. The Duenna's  
The castle wall; I first will go, reward  
Since somewhat dark the path doth grow  
That thither leads; it hath not been  
Opened above ten weeks, I ween, 15420  
And thou art first to enter there.

### *The Lover.*

Cried I: By Saint Remy I swear,  
Though every yard cost ten to twenty  
Gold marks, (my friend had said that plenty  
Must be my promises, e'en though  
I should some afterwhiles forego,)  
Fine cloth I'll give you, green or blue,  
If that small door you pass me through.

## 2 THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

**The** From thence the hag betook her straight,  
**entry** And I ran towards the postern gate 15430  
**won** She'd told of, putting up a prayer  
 To God for safe arrival where  
 I fain would be. I spake no word,  
 But joy supreme within me stirred  
 To find the door ajar, and in  
 I sprang, then fixed again the pin,  
 Breathing more freely, since I knew  
 That Evil-Tongue his guerdon due  
 Had gained, and in the moat lay dead;  
 Then erst was death to joyance wed. 15440  
 There I espied the broken door,  
 And, passing through, beheld before  
 Mine eyes the God of Love and all  
 The host that had obeyed his call  
 For my behoof; what thanks I owe  
 To those who brake that doorway through!  
 God and Saint Benet help and speed  
 The men who did that worthy deed.  
 They hight: False-Seeming, traitor vile,  
 Son of Hypocrisy by Guile 15450  
 Or Lying, who with Virtue wars,  
 And oft-times deals her ugly scars.  
 Next stood Constrained-Abstinence,  
 Friend of False-Seeming, and who thence  
 By him with Antichrist is great,  
 E'en as the holy books relate.  
 In any case I raised a prayer,  
 For them since they so friendly were.

Would one his soul to treachery trim,  
 False-Seeming master is for him; 15460

## THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE 3

And liars who true men would seem,  
Constrained-Abstinence should deem  
Their model.

Sweet-  
Looks  
reappears

When I thus had found  
The door-shards scattered on the ground,  
And all the gathered host inside  
Ready for war whate'er betide,  
If joy were mine, no man need ask !  
And while I set myself the task  
To find Sweet-Looks, all suddenly  
He came : I cried ' Ben'dicite ' ! 15470  
The God of Love to ease my pain  
Had sent me this dear friend again,  
And so extreme was my delight  
I well-nigh fainted at the sight.  
Soon as he saw me, from his eyes  
Shot forth bright beams of glad surprise,  
And he with finger pointed out  
Fair-Welcome, who with joyous shout  
Ran towards me, with that courtesy  
Which from his mother learned had he. 15480

### LXXVII

How in the fastness of the tower  
The Lover gains Fair-Welcome's bower,  
Who offers his desire to speed.  
False-Seeming 'twas who helped his need.

I DID him reverence as he came,  
Who graciously returned the same,  
With thanks abundant for the wreath.  
Sir, cried I, with respondent breath,

#### 4 THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

**Mutual courtesies** It scarce becomes me to receive  
 Your courteous words, for I believe 15490  
 Ten thousand thanks to you I owe,  
 Who my poor offering honoured so  
 By your acceptance ; be you sure  
 Deep sense of your kind love will dure  
 Long in my breast ; command me what  
 You will, and I will fail you not ;  
 Nor doubt you I should think to swerve  
 From aught that your desire may serve.  
 Do you but utter a command,  
 And I straightway will set my hand 15500  
 Thereto, my life and goods will I  
 Devote to you ungrudgingly.  
 Yea ! though you claimed my very soul  
 'Twere yours forthwith, entire and whole.  
 Essay me then, that I may prove  
 Myself well worthy utmost love.  
 Or if I fail, God grant that thence  
 I lack all joy in each sweet sense.

#### *Fair-Welcome.*

Cried he : I thank you, gentle sir,  
 To do not so would cast a slur 15510  
 On my good name—if I possess  
 Aught that can give you happiness,  
 Accept it—freely share with me  
 Goods, honour, all are yours, pardee !

#### *The Lover.*

Fair sir, I cried, for love so tender  
 A hundred thousand thanks I render,

## THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE 5

And for your proffer, more than kind, But nowise could I bring my mind To ask for further gift than you Have given already, which in my view Exceeds all Alexander's gold.	Vain hope  15520
--	---------------------------

I raised my hand in hope to hold At last that lovely Rose that I Had craved so long and ardently, Deeming the converse sweet and soft That had betwixt us passed so oft, And that fond friendship, kind and dear, Whereby our hearts were drawn so near, Were tokens that my end was gained, Alas! false hope, my heart that fained.	       15530
--	-----------------------------------

### LXXVIII

How the fond Lover's hope to gain  
 The' Rose, through Danger fell, proved vain,  
 For soon as his attempt he spied,  
 With fearsome shout the monster cried.

<b>A</b> LAS! fools' projects oft fall short! Of fate I seemed the toy and sport, For even as I raised my hand, Foul Danger in the path did stand. The villain may a wolf devour! Hid in an angle, near the flower He stood, and, watching us, each word Set down that he betwixt us heard, And then with rage and fury yelled, The while his club aloft he held:	     15540
--	---------------------------

## 6 THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

### *Danger to the Lover.*

Again Fly, varlet! quick! I bid you fly  
chased Forthwith, unless you long to die,  
forth The devil 'tis that brings you here,  
The fiend accurst, the ravisher,  
In this base robbery fain would he  
Take part, I doubt not, readily. 15550  
Although no saint afford me aid,  
God help me! be you well afraid  
O vassal, lest I break your head.

### *The Lover.*

Then Fear and Shame together sped  
Towards me when they heard him cry  
"Fly! fly! thou varlet," lustily.  
Ah! had he merely used his tongue!  
But he the devil brought among  
Us there, and drove the saints away;  
What tricks the treacherous wretch doth play!  
And then, fulfilled of rage, the three, 15561  
With one accord fell foul of me,  
Thrusting my hands behind my back.  
Cried they, "Of more you needs must lack  
Than what you have already won.  
'Tis plain by what you now have done  
That you Fair-Welcome understood  
But ill when he would work you good.  
His all he lightly offered you  
With heart, kind, generous, frank, and true, 15570  
And you with utter disregard  
Of honesty his goods had shared  
Beyond the sense in which 'twas meant,  
For, though unspoken, the intent



# THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE 7

Is clear when one doth nobly make  
An offer for politeness' sake.  
What more than that could mortal do?  
But we, sir trickster, ask of you  
Wherefore his words in plainest sense  
You take not, free of all pretence?

The  
 Lover re-  
 proached

15580

To understand his words awry  
Convicts you of stupidity,  
Or else perchance you deem it fit  
To play the part of foolish wit.  
To you the Rose he offered not,  
And indecorous 'twere, we wot,  
For you to ask him such a thing,  
Or snatch it, he not offering.

Straightly we ask with what intent  
Your offering unto him was sent;  
Was not your end, as we suppose,  
To cozen him, and steal the Rose?  
With treachery vile and falseness you  
Profess to him that you will do  
Some service, though in truth his foe  
You prove. Ne'er yet in book, we trow,  
Was writ a crime more wholly curst.  
Therefore, although your heart should  
burst

15590

With grief, this precinct must you flee,  
Wherefrom we drove you formerly.  
The devil 'twas that brought you back,  
For scarce can you remembrance lack  
How you from out this place were driven;  
Be off, and seek another heaven.  
Small sense displayed that guardian who  
Chose to admit a fool like you,

15600

## 8 THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

**Fear and** For had she known your treacherous mind,  
**Shame** She ne'er had suffered you behind  
**speak** The hedge to win. Grossly deceived  
 Fair-Welcome was when he received 15610  
 Your visit here, he thought to be  
 Your friend, and found but treachery.  
 You're like a dog that swims a-land,  
 And on the bank doth barking stand.  
 Be off! go seek your prey elsewhere,  
 And let your footsteps quickly bear  
 You hence; away! our stairs descend  
 Forthwith, or ware you evil end;  
 For chance it is one cometh here  
 Leftsoons whose face you well may fear, 15620  
 For simple reckoning will he measure  
 With one who hither comes on pleasure.

Sir madman! vile, presumptuous sot!  
 Who neither faith nor truth doth wot,  
 What hath Fair-Welcome 'gainst you done?  
 By some foul crime hath he then won  
 Your anger and undying hate  
 That you his life would desolate?  
 And when all things that you possessed  
 You proffered him, 'twere lightly guessed 15630  
 That 'twas with hope he would receive  
 You hither, and our watch deceive  
 For your behoof, and e'en his birds  
 And dogs give you for your fair words.  
 Right foolishly hath he behaved,  
 But, by the God who all men saved,  
 And by St. Faith, so great a wrong  
 Hath he committed, that in strong

And cruel durance shall he lie  
 From day to day all hopelessly.  
 Bound shall he be with many a chain,  
 Nor ever while he lives shall gain  
 Freedom, whereby he might once more  
 Vex us again as heretofore.  
 'Twas to your loss that e'er you saw  
 This caitiff, who defies our law.

15640 Fair-  
 Wel-  
 come's  
 evil case

*The Author.*

Then not alone they beat him, but  
 Within the tower they closely shut  
 Their victim, and, with insults great,  
 'Neath three strong locks incarcerate  
 Him hopelessly; handcuff and chain  
 Are needless, for three locks make vain  
 All chance of flight. 'Twas but a taste  
 (Since now were they oppressed with haste)  
 Of pain to come when they returned,  
 For 'gainst him hot their anger burned.

15650

LXXIX

This tells how Danger, Fear, and Shame  
 In force against the Lover came  
 And beat him, till for mercy he  
 Begged, with profound humility.

15660

*The Lover.*

THE three to words confined them not,  
 But coming quickly to the spot  
 Where I, alarmed and helpless, stood,  
 O'ercome with fear and drearihood,

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B

10 THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

**The** My body set they to torment  
**Lover** And vex ; God grant they may repent  
**ill-treated** One day the outrage on me done.  
 Alas ! my death I well-nigh won  
 Thereby, though offered I to yield,  
 But 'gainst all ruth their hearts seemed steeled.  
 At last, their fierceness to assuage, 16671  
 Proposed I that they should encage  
 Me with Fair-Welcome in his cell.  
 Danger, quoth I, whom all know well  
 To be a frank and generous knight,  
 With every gracious virtue dight,  
 And you, dear Shame, and kind-heart Fear,  
 Sweet virgins, of all blemish clear,  
 Who deed or word unfit would scorn,  
 Of Reason's noble lineage born, 16680  
 Permit me to become your slave,  
 And shut me close, as 'twere my grave,  
 Beside Fair-Welcome in the tower,  
 For ever helpless 'neath your power ;  
 And loyal promise will I give  
 Therein contentedly to live,  
 And such good service render you,  
 As must your hearts with joy imbue.  
 Good Lord ! if caitiff wretch I were,  
 A traitor, thief, or ravisher, 16690  
 Or if I feared a murderer's fate,  
 I scarce need ask that prison gate  
 Might close on one who could not fail  
 To find him lodged within a gaol,  
 For whether I would or not, pardee,  
 The law's long arm would stretch to me.  
 And if it were adjudged that I  
 Should be dismembered by-and-by,

Why then, I trow, the chance is nought  
 But what I should ere long be caught. 15700  
 For God's dear love I beg you, then,  
 That I may with this best of men  
 Be caged ; but if it e'er be proved  
 That I have been by aught else moved  
 Than wish to serve him, let me be  
 Hence banished ignominiously.  
 No man exists but hath some fault,  
 But if I in your service halt,  
 Then bag and baggage drive me hence,  
 'To purge my folly and offence. 15710  
 And if your wrath I yet excite,  
 On me let chastisement alight,  
 But let none others judge of me  
 Than you, most honourable three,  
 Since justice true, for high or low,  
 Ye most inevitably know ;  
 And were Fair-Welcome joined with ye,  
 He judge supreme o'er all might be ;  
 And should occur some difference  
 Betwixt you, he would judge the sense 15720  
 Of right and wrong, and hold the scale  
 With such clear wit as could not fail.  
 Fear not that I from hence will budge,  
 'Though stripes or death ye should adjudge.

The  
 Lover's  
 proposal

*Danger.*

Then loudly Danger laughed, and said :  
 A fair request now, by my head !  
 Into one gaol to thrust ye twain !  
 You, with your merry heart and fain,

## 12 THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

**Danger's** And he, so sweet and debonair ;  
**scornful** To trust together such a pair 15730  
**reply** Would be the foxes with the geese  
 To cage, that both might dwell in  
 peace.  
 Betake yourself elsewhere, I pray,  
 'Tis clear that you but come this way  
 To bring upon us foul disgrace,  
 Hence, nor show here again your face.  
 To ask us that your friend may rule  
 As judge, but stamps you for a fool.  
 A judge ! by Him who judges all !  
 In wondrous wise would judgments fall 15740  
 Should we for blindfold justice' sake  
 An umpire of a culprit make.  
 As one condemned Fair-Welcome stands,  
 And droll 'twould be if now our hands  
 Should make him judge and arbiter !  
 No ! till the deluge reappear  
 Fast shall he stay within the tower.  
 To keep him fast we'll use our power,  
 Before it haps that every Rose  
 To ruthless spoilers he expose. 15750  
 Each robber will good greeting get  
 If by Fair-Welcome he be met,  
 And therefore needful 'tis that he  
 Be prisoner kept unendingly.  
 No man shall to the Roses find  
 Access, except he ride the wind,  
 Unless, perchance, he prove so strong  
 As seize the prize by roughshod wrong,  
 And playing such a prank, may he  
 As goal attain the gallows-tree. 15760

*The Lover.*

Cried I: Most grievous wrong you do,  
 One to confine and punish who  
 Is innocent of any crime,  
 And whose sole thought throughout all time  
 Is to befriend the world around him.  
 Wherefore in prison have you bound him,  
 Except for that he hath to me  
 Shown kindly love and sympathy?  
 Without occasion more than this  
 In prison lies he, reft of bliss,  
 And therefore might with reason be,  
 An't please you, set at liberty.  
 Great sir, most humbly I implore  
 That you will punish him no more:  
 Long hath he suffered dolorous pain,  
 I pray you set him free again.

The  
 Lover's  
 best  
 friend

16770

*Danger, Fear, and Shame.*

I'faith, cried they, this fellow mocks,  
 Or deems us dull as stones or stocks,  
 When he proposes we should render  
 Full freedom to this gross offender.  
 But he shall find that never more  
 Through window-bar or prison door  
 His rascal friend shall show his head.

16780

*The Lover.*

And then all three against me sped,  
 Each striving who should thrust me out,  
 Which scarce had grieved me less, I doubt,

## 14 THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

The call Than if I had been crucified.  
to arms And therefore piteously I cried  
For mercy, though low-voiced I spoke,  
To summon up the friendly folk 15790  
And sentinels about the gate,  
Misdoubting else a cruel fate,  
And when my cries for help they heard,  
A shout rose that the welkin stirred :

### LXXX

How all the Barons of the host  
Together run, for fear that lost  
May be their friend, who cruelly  
Is beaten by the guardians three.

#### *The Barons.*

TO arms ! to arms ! brave barons all,  
Haste ye to aid, ere worse befall, 15800  
Now were the faithful Lover lost  
Unless God help him, and our host.  
He by the watch-dogs, arms fast tied,  
Is strangled, bruised, and crucified.

#### *The Author.*

He cried for mercy in a tone  
So low that scarce they heard his moan,  
Yea, verily so faint and hoarse  
His voice was, and devoid of force,  
That with good reason might they think  
The wretch it rose from neared the brink 15810  
Of death, or one whose throat was bound  
With cruel, throttling cord around.



Or sounds it as the voice of one  
 Who unto death is being done,  
 Yet know we nought of his estate,  
 Though seemeth it right desperate,  
 And nearing death if help come not.  
 Thence flees Fair-Welcome at full trot,  
 Who hath to him such comfort been,  
 And needful now it is, I ween,  
 Fair-Welcome should return again,  
 To which end all take arms amain.

The  
 Lover  
 hard  
 bestead

15820

*The Lover.*

Most surely to my last long home  
 I'd gone if succour had not come.  
 But quickly all the Barons flew  
 To arms, so soon as e'er they knew  
 By sight and sound of my distress.  
 For me, alas! I must confess  
 That, tangled in the snares of love,  
 I stood, bereft of power to move,  
 Spectator of the desperate fight  
 Which 'neath my wondering eyes was dight.  
 For soon as e'er the guardians saw  
 This mighty host anigh them draw,  
 The three a league between them sware,  
 Good faith to keep, great deeds to dare,  
 And in united phalanx stand,  
 Till bowed 'neath death's all-conquering hand,  
 A strong and helpful brotherhood:  
 And I who saw from where I stood  
 Their fierce expression of defiance,  
 Trembled at this most dread alliance.

15880

15840

And soon as by the host was seen  
 This compact and firm league between  
 The guardians, they a bond likewise  
 Fast swore, and pledged them to the eyes  
 To stand together in that place  
 'Till grim death met they, face to face.  
 With warlike rage their bosoms glow  
 The guardians' pride to overthrow, 15850  
 And one and all prepare to meet  
 The foe, for victory or defeat.  
 Now hear you how the battle went,  
 As each 'gainst each his fury spent.

## LXXXI

Herein the Author doth disown,  
 To save his honour and renown,  
 Unseemly words, and prays that he  
 May not be taken wrongfully.

*The Author.*

O UNDERSTAND, ye lovers true  
 (May Venus' son keep watch o'er you  
 For ever, with a gentle eye), 15801  
 Within this bosket you the cry  
 May hear of dogs as they pursue  
 The coney, and the ferret too  
 Shall drive him onwards towards the snare  
 Which subtle hands for him prepare.  
 In noting all that I have said,  
 You will in love be well bestead,  
 And if you aught of trouble find,  
 Thereon will I illume your mind, 15870

For you shall hear me, bit by bit,  
 Set forth the dream and gloss on it,  
 And lightly then may you explain  
 Love's art to those who deem it vain.  
 Clear shall be made by that I write  
 E'en now, what I did erst indite,  
 And also that which followeth.  
 But ere I further spend my breath,  
 I fain would say one little word,  
 Lest evil tongues be 'gainst me stirred.  
 No purpose have I to abuse  
 Pure minds, but would my faith excuse.

The  
 Author's  
 intent

15880

## LXXXII

The Author prays that his intent  
 Be kindly ta'en—no harm is meant.

O GENTLE lovers, all and each,  
 By love's sweet pleasures I beseech  
 Of you, that if herein ye see  
 Some words which smack of ribaldry,  
 Whereof foul slanderous tongues might make  
 Occasion 'gainst us to awake  
 Contempt for that we've said or writ,  
 Ye courteously naysay their wit;  
 And when you've given such folk the lie,  
 And treated them conformably,  
 If there shall fall within my task  
 Some things whereof I pardon ask,  
 Past doubt you will forgive me them,  
 And strive men's censuring speech to stem,

15890

## 18 THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

**Value of** Explaining how the matter needs  
**plain** That 'mid fair flowers must sprout some weeds ;  
**phrase** And for my subject must I use 15901  
 Plain words, sans liberty to choose.  
 And ever find I fair and right  
 The phrase Dan Sallust doth indite,  
 Wherein he saith : If equal praise  
 Deserveth not the man who lays  
 A noble deed within a book,  
 Whereon the world at large may look  
 With him who did the deed, yet he  
 Who sings the achievement faithfully, 15910  
 With words well suited to the tale,  
 Is to the world of great avail :  
 For if the author be no fool,  
 But writeth after wisdom's rule,  
 Then should the words and phrase, wherein  
 He sets his facts, be close akin  
 With them ; I therefore choose my way  
 Plain things in plainest phrase to say.

### LXXXIII

The Author trusts that not askance  
 Will ladies view this fair Romance. 15920

**A**ND, ladies fair, I trust, as well,  
 That (whether dame or damosel,  
 Love's bond, or whole as yet of heart)  
 If found you in the former part  
 Some words which you unseemly think,  
 You'll kindly let your eyelids wink

Thereon, nor rashly deem that I ✕  
 Would women treat despitefully,  
 Nor therefore heap too much of blame  
 On this my book, which nowise shame 15080  
 Would do you, but instruct your wit :  
 For therein not one word unfit,  
 Of anger or malevolence,  
 Or passion, or ill-will prepense,  
 Nor envy, hatred, or despite  
 'Gainst any woman have I dight,  
 For no man would his finger stretch  
 'Gainst women, but some cold-heart wretch.  
 And if you some rude phrases find  
 In this my poem, bear in mind 15040  
 That good and healthful 'tis for me  
 And you alike ourselves to see.

But ladies, if you deem I fail  
 Of truth or justice in my tale, ✕  
 As liar hold not me in scorn,  
 But those who wrote, ere I was born,  
 The words I once again repeat.  
 And count you not those words unmeet  
 And false, unless you would condemn  
 The sages whence I gathered them, 15050  
 And deem that they but fables told  
 Who framed the famous books of old ;  
 But fainly I confess, forsooth,  
 I deem those sages wrote but truth  
 Of women's ways, for they were not  
 Foolish, or drunk, or mad I wot,  
 But all by long experience knew  
 What women dream of, say, and do ;

20 THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

**Wisdom** For all alike from age to age  
**of old** Are they writ down in history's page. 15060  
**days**

Forgive me then, fair ladies, nor  
 Scold me for what men wrote of yore,  
 Which I but follow, save at times  
 Some innocent word to help my rhymes  
 I add, as poets needs must do,  
 Would they their matter carry through,  
 By some invention of their own.  
 For all true poets work alone,  
 For delectation and delight  
 Of those who read their work aright. 15070

And if some people grumble still,  
 And of my work and me speak ill,  
 Because they keenly feel the bite  
 Of that sharp tooth wherewith I dight  
 False-Seeming's words, and so conspire  
 And plot to punish me with dire  
 And grievous chastisement, because  
 With rage they read my rasping saws,  
 Then here declare I before all,  
 I ne'er from out my lips let fall 15080  
 A word to injure living man,  
 Who doth his life on virtue plan  
 Beneath the Church's holy care,  
 Whatever robe or frock he wear.

But though a sinner I confess  
 Myself to be, I ne'ertheless  
 Catch up my bow, and thence let fly  
 My arrows, which shall grievously

Wound such vile folk (and tear to bits  
 Their mask) as Christ for hypocrites  
 15990 Condemned, all one it is to me  
 If monks or secular they be ;  
 Though some of these with will to show  
 Their holiness will fain forego  
 Flesh meat, and by their abstinence  
 Parade make of their penitence,  
 As though they kept the fast of Lent,  
 Far better 'twere if they forewent  
 Their neighbours to devour, forsooth,  
 And bite with slander's cruel tooth. 16000  
 Of such alone my targe I make,  
 To wound and tear and bruise and  
 break.

Evil only  
 censured

At those I shoot as e'en I may,  
 But if one sets him in the way  
 Whereas my shaft of needs must fly,  
 And so receives it wilfully,  
 Misled by foolishness and pride,  
 When lightly might he stand aside ;  
 Though he reproached me, being hit,  
 I should not blame myself one bit, 16010  
 Although his death he thereby found,  
 For no man will mine arrow wound  
 Who fain would keep him safe from me,  
 If he but guard him honestly.  
 And whosoe'er a wound doth feel  
 Delivered by my piercing steel,  
 May quickly of his sore be quit  
 If he but cast the hypocrite.  
 And howsue'er some men profess  
 Instinct to be with nobleness, 16020

## 22 THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

Fran- Nought have I said, whereof I know,  
 chise That they in any wise can show  
 combats At variance with the books of old,  
 Danger Or men's experience manifold ;  
 Or which fair reason doth condemn :  
 Agree they not ?—the worse for them.  
 And were there found, by closest search,  
 One word in slight of holy Church,  
 Ready am I to make amend,  
 For 'neath her rule my soul I bend. 16080

### LXXXIV

Here doth the Author turn again  
 Unto his tale, and tells amain  
 How Dame Franchise with Danger sought  
 To combat, but all vainly fought.

**T**HEN firstly Franchise, gentle dame,  
 Against dread Danger humbly came,  
 Whose bearing proud and angry eye  
 Outrage bespoke, and felony.  
 A club he grasped within his fist,  
 Which dexterously he knew to twist 16040  
 And twirl, that ne'er against it shield  
 Could stand, and so he knew to wield  
 His weapon, that the man who dared  
 Anigh it come, but evil fared,  
 Unless right well he knew the way  
 Of subtlest skill in battle play,  
 And bold was he who dared to face  
 The potence of that monstrous mace.



From out Refusal's wood was ta'en  
 That club, of lovers' bar and bane.  
 His buckler broidered was of strife,  
 With tales that vilify fair life.

The arms  
 of Fran-  
 chise  
 16050

Franchise was so well armed that she  
 Would not be vanquished easily,  
 For well could she her cause defend.  
 Against her foeman did she bend  
 Her lance, prepared to force the gate,  
 For fashioned was it fair and straight,  
 And had been, as it seemed to me,  
 Cut in the wood of Flattery, 16060  
 From trees that grow but in Bière,  
 Well steeled with courteous speech and fair.  
 Her shield was supplication sweet,  
 Such as 'tis rare on earth to meet,  
 And all around 'twas fringed with words  
 Soft as the piping of small birds,  
 With promises, and hands clasped tight,  
 And oaths and confidences dight,  
 All painted most entrancingly.  
 Gazing thereon one could but be 16070  
 In heart assured that 'twas Largess  
 Coloured and carved its loveliness,  
 So richly was its field bedeckt.  
 And Franchise, who did well protect  
 Therewith her body, lightly shook  
 Her spear-staff, and the monster strook  
 Boldly, though he no coward were,  
 But fearlessly his weapon bare  
 (As Renouard of the Staff were he,  
 Come back to life all suddenly), 16080

## 24 THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

**Danger's  
onslaught** And with his club her shielding split,  
So furiously he battered it.  
And he, forsooth, such might had got,  
That arms and armour feared he not,  
But with his buckler hid his paunch  
So well, that vainly did she launch  
Her lance against it, for the stroke  
Therefrom the tempered steel-head broke.  
Then, though his harness hindered him  
A moment's space, the felon grim, 10090  
Enraged and maddened by the blow,  
Hurled all his force against his foe,  
Seized on her lance with one great  
bound,  
Which fell in shards upon the ground  
Beneath his club, then loud he cried :

### *Danger to Franchise.*

Why 'neath my arm hast thou not died,  
Thou ribald wretch, devoid of grace?  
How dar'st thou still to show thy face  
In arms against a noble knight?

### *The Lover.*

And then her shield with all his might 10100  
He brake, and made the damsel sweet  
Recoil before his furious feet,  
And fall upon her knees, while he  
Strikes and insults her ruthlessly.  
Nor had her life his blows withstood,  
Had been her shield mere oaken wood.

*Danger to Franchise.*

Vile woman, and abandoned quean,  
 Most foully I deceived have been  
 In days gone by, by your false tongue,  
 Which hath my watchful care unstrung, 16110  
 To that vile libertine the bliss  
 Permitting, my sweet Rose to kiss;  
 The devil 'twas that drove me on,  
 Good-natured fool, to grant the boon,  
 But, by the holy body of God,  
 My patient kindness you've out-trod,  
 And now past doubt shall surely die.

Pity aids  
 Fran-  
 chise

*The Author.*

Then doth the helpless damsel cry  
 Mercy in name of God's sweet love,  
 Unable thence one step to move, 16120  
 While shakes the boor his club in air,  
 Rages, and by all saints doth swear  
 That die she must without delay.  
 Pity looks on in dire dismay  
 One moment, then all unafraid  
 Of Danger, runs to Franchise' aid.  
 Within her hand she grasped a sword  
 Of steel, yclept a misericorde,  
 By way of weapon, which with tears  
 She bathed, o'ercome with hopes and fears. 16130  
 This sword, unless the author lie,  
 Will adamant pierce readily,  
 (The keenness of its point is such,)  
 How slight soe'er may be the touch.  
 Her shield of solacing was made,  
 And round its edges were displayed

26 THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

Shame re- Soft sighs, and groans, and sad complaint.  
proaches Pity, whose tears knew no restraint,  
Danger Thrust the foul caitiff through and through,  
Though fought he fierce as leopards do. 16140  
But when she had in tears immersed  
The villain and his arms accurst,  
He felt a softening of the heart,  
And trowed his spirit must depart  
O'erwhelmed within the plenteous flood.  
Ne'er yet before had hardihood  
Of words or deeds so conquered him.  
He felt strength fail and senses swim;  
Tottering and weak he fears to fall,  
And fain would flee. Then Shame doth call:

*Shame.*

O Danger, Danger, trusted knave, 16151  
If you, whom all account so brave,  
Should recreant prove, Fair-Welcome will  
Escape, and all our care prove nil;  
And then will he betray the Rose  
That we with such great pains enclose  
And guard, and unto villains give  
That treasure which not long will live,  
But wan and pale will fade away;  
O heed my speech or rue the day. 16160  
Boasting apart, full well I know,  
That if a certain wind should blow  
Herein, while stands the gate ajar,  
It would the Rose blooms sadly mar,  
For 'twould too much its own seed shed,  
Or else strange seed be scatterèd,

## THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE 27

Whereby the Rose might burdened be,  
 May God stay such calamity.  
 And even though this grain should not  
 Flourish and grow, it well I wot 16170  
 May to the Rose cause suffering,  
 Or e'en its death thereof may spring.  
 Or if 'twere spared by cruel death,  
 Yet might the wind's unruly breath  
 So mix the grain in some ill hour,  
 That through such burden failed the flower,  
 Or that the leaves should feel the shock  
 In such wise that they sway and rock,  
 Till lastly falling they display  
 Red buttons to the light of day ; 16180  
 Which God forbid, for then 'twere said  
 That ruffians had its ruin sped.  
 And thus should we incur the hate  
 Of Jealousy, and dread our fate  
 Would be, behind death's shadow sunk ;  
 The devil himself hath made you drunk.

**Shame  
 scolds  
 Pity**

### *The Author.*

Help! help! cried Danger, help, I say!  
 And thereon Shame sped straight away  
 To Pity, and with menace plied  
 Her soft heart, as she loudly cried : 16190

### *Shame.*

You've lived too long, vile Pity, yield!  
 Or in a trice will I your shield  
 Destroy, and you quick death shall win,  
 Thou fool! this combat to begin.

## 28 THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

*The Author.*

Shame's valiancy A sword Shame brandished, straight and long,  
 Fine tempered, and exceeding strong.  
 On secret stithy was the blade  
 Of suffering and long vigils made,  
 And she a wondrous shield had framed  
 Which Fear-of-ill-renown was named ; 16200  
 Of wood it was, on shoulder slung,  
 And painted o'er with many a tongue.  
 Pity, she struck across the head,  
 Who yielded her as life were fled.  
 But to her aid swift ran Desire,  
 A noble knight with heart afire,  
 And joined with Shame in furious strife.  
 A sword he bare, called Joyous-Life,  
 And did a shield called Ease employ,  
 Decked out with happiness and joy. 16210  
 He struck at Shame, but she his drift  
 Forefended, with her shield uplift,  
 And 'scaped his sword-point void of scratch.  
 Then she with ready hand did catch  
 Her chance, and brought her shield adown  
 With murderous force against his crown,  
 And might, as prone he lay beneath  
 Her feet, have clove him to the teeth,  
 Had God not stayed her purpose fell,  
 And sent a champion hight Hide-Well. 16220

A warrior skilled and good was he,  
 Yet secret and right hard to see.  
 The sword he held, of peace was fain,  
 Like to a tongue half cleft in twain,

And when he shook it, though anear  
 One stood, he nought thereof would hear,  
 For shrieked it not, nor sang on high,  
 Although of wondrous potency.  
 His target was Retreat-obscure  
 (No bird e'er in a place more sure 16280  
 Laid eggs), set round with alleys blind,  
 Through which no man his way could find.  
 On Shame he brought down such a stroke  
 With all his force, as well-nigh broke  
 Her neck, and left her all amazed.

Hide-  
 well's  
 promises

*Hide-Well.*

O Shame ! he cried, with voice loud raised,  
 The caitiff wretch vile Jealousy  
 Nought of the deed shall ever see,  
 That swear I faithfully, with hand  
 Uplift, as I before you stand, 16240  
 A thousand oaths thereto I swear,  
 Shall that not ease your heart of care ?  
 And since that Evil-Tongue is slain,  
 You must within my ward remain.

LXXXV

This tells how Hide-Well overcame  
 In well-fought field the recreant Shame.  
 And Fear and Courage in like way  
 Show forth their skill in weapon-play.

HERETO could Shame scarce make reply,  
 But Fear upleapt right wrathfully 16250  
 (Though commonly so faint of heart),  
 On whom doth Shame quick glances dart ;

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**Courage** And when Fear saw she in such state  
**combats** Equipped, her sword, keen-edged as fate,  
**Fear** She set her hand upon, which hight  
 A Touch-of-Pride (thereof 'twas dight),  
 And when it flew from out the sheath,  
 More bright than beryl-stone beneath  
 The new-born sun's first rays 'twas seen.  
 Terror-of-Peril, as I ween, 16260  
 Fear had for shield, set round with pain  
 And labour ; and she then would fain  
 Cleave Hide-Well through, and thereby take  
 Swift vengeance for her cousin's sake.  
 With mighty force against his shield  
 She struck, which 'neath the blow did yield,  
 And tottering helplessly, he fell.  
 Courage, with cry like tocsin bell,  
 He called, who ran in great alarm  
 Thither, for if Fear's potent arm 16270  
 Had once more struck his bruised head,  
 For aye had Hide-Well lain stark dead.

Courage, alike in deed and word,  
 Was ever bold and true ; his sword  
 For gleaming brightness well beseen,  
 Was with the steel of fury keen.  
 Unto his shield, of glorious fame,  
 Scornor-of-Death, he gave the name,  
 And all around its border bright  
 With Joy-in-Danger was it dight. 16280  
 With madness against Fear he rushed,  
 With one stroke deeming to have crushed  
 Her might. But she the stroke let fall,  
 Leaping aside, for knew she all



The art of fence, and then she gave  
 One stroke unto her foeman brave,  
 That stretched him supine on the field,  
 For suchlike blow no targe could shield.  
 When Courage finds him thus adown,  
 Fear begs he, in God's name, to crown 16290  
 Triumph with mercy. No reply  
 Fear makes, except—Nay, caitiff, die!

Surety  
 attacks  
 Fear

*Surety speaks to Fear.*

But suddenly doth Surety call,  
 Pardee! 'tis you, O Fear, must fall  
 Whate'er you do. Times past you'd dare  
 Less than a coward trembling hare  
 A hundred times; you brave are now,  
 And to the devil 'tis you owe  
 The spirit that enabled you  
 'Gainst Courage this bold deed to do, 16300  
 Who tourneying-lists frequenteth much,  
 And knows with skilful hand to clutch  
 The wasting sword, ne'er yet till now  
 Beneath your arm he quailed, I trow.  
 In every fight but this men see  
 You fly, or yield you readily.  
 'Twas thus that you in days of yore,  
 With thievish Cacus fled before  
 The club of mighty Hercules,  
 Then fled you as the heron flees 16310  
 The falcon, for to Cacus lent  
 You wings, alone on safety bent,  
 When he the sacred heifers stole,  
 And hid them in his cavern hole,

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**Fear** Dragging them thither by the tail,  
**victorious** That thus all clue and trace might fail  
 Of whither went they ; then you showed  
 To all the world how little glowed  
 Of daring in your faint-heart breast,  
 A coward base you stood confessed 16320  
 Thenceforth, and since that day you  
     nought  
 Of knowledge in the field have bought  
 Of war, except to run away  
 Whene'er you see the blade-steel grey ;  
 Now shall you dearly suffer for  
 Your rashness, venturing thus on war.

#### *The Author.*

A precious sword-blade Surety bare,  
 Tempered with diligence and care ;  
 Her shield, hight Peace, was bordered  
     round  
 With good accord, and judgment sound. 16330  
 At Fear she struck as fain would she  
 Destroy her, but she suddenly  
 Behind her shield her body hid,  
 And when the sword-stroke fell, it slid  
 From off the targe, and harmless lay  
 Deep buried in earth's senseless clay.  
 Then Fear did unto Surety deal  
 A blow, that made her senses reel,  
 And little lacked it of that she  
 Had killed outright her enemy. 16340  
 Both shield and sword from out her hands  
 Are dashed—defenceless there she stands.

## LXXXVI

'This tells how Fear 'gainst Surety fought,  
 And each the other's ruin sought,  
 While many a champion interwove  
 Fierce combat, and for mastery strove.

**W**HAT think you was by Surety done, **The fight renewed**  
 When that the fight had thuswise gone,  
 To give example? Fear she grasped  
 By both her ears, while Fear tight clasped 16860  
 Her enemy, and thus the two,  
 With others, tried who best could do,  
 And never yet in combat were,  
 I trow, beseen an angrier pair,  
 Nor e'er before in tourney fierce  
 Such play was made of thrust and tierce.  
 Hither and thither leapt they then,  
 Till both sides summoned up their men,  
 Who towards them hasting came pell mell,  
 And round about the sword-strokes fell, 16860  
 As thick and sharp as April hail,  
 While each doth murderously assail  
 His neighbour. Ne'er before that hour,  
 Or since, hath been more deadly stour.  
 Abhorring lies, I'm bound to say,  
 That those who 'gainst the castle lay  
 Their siege, had little of success,  
 And Love's fair god, in deep distress,  
 Seeing his warriors doomed to death  
 Unto his mother, in a breath, 16870  
 Sweet-Looks dispatches, with Franchise,  
 Begging that she, despising ease,  
 Will haste her straightway to his aid.  
 But in the meantime have they made

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**Love's** A truce, which shall for eight days dure,  
**truce** Or more or less, by no means sure  
 Am I which 'twas. Indeed, for ever  
 It well might hold, should none endeavour  
 To force or break it. Truth to tell,  
 If only had the war gone well 16380  
 With Love, he surely ne'er had made  
 The armistice his plans to aid;  
 And if the guardians had supposed  
 That Love was purposed and disposed  
 To break the truce, they had agreed  
 By no means to their foeman's need,  
 Nor had they willingly excused  
 The treachery wherewith Love abused  
 Their confidence. They had denied  
 All truce, knew they that Venus tried 16390  
 To join therein, but now 'twas done,  
 And articles agreed upon.  
 And then the host retired somewhat,  
 As doth an army which hath not  
 Scattered the foe, but draws aback  
 To gather force for fresh attack.

## LXXXVII

This tells how messengers, by Love,  
 Are sent Queen Venus' heart to move  
 In such wise that she condescend  
 Her help to Cupid's host to lend. 16400

**S**TRAIGHT from the host the couriers twain  
 Journey afar, till they amain  
 To Cythera fair isle are come,  
 And welcome find in Venus' home.

Sweet Cythera is a mountain high,  
 Set in a plain surrounded by  
 A thick-grown wood, so high indeed,  
 That mightiest archer ne'er could speed  
 A shaft its battlements to reach.

Venus  
 and  
 Adonis

Venus, who doth all women teach,  
 Lights up this spot with sweetest grace,  
 Making its courts her dwelling-place.  
 Its joys would I describe, but fear  
 I might therewith but tire your ear,  
 And doubt I might grow weary too,  
 Therefore 'tis passed with brief review.

16410

Queen Venus to the woods was gone  
 A hunting, but not all alone,  
 For with her bright Adonis went,  
 On whom her fondest love was spent.  
 Almost a boy was he in years,  
 But huntsman good, untamed by fears,  
 A comely well-beseeming youth,  
 Just ripening into man, forsooth.

16420

The hour of noon was overpast  
 And Venus, wearied, down had cast  
 Herself beside him on the grass,  
 Where shadowed by an aspen 'twas,  
 Near to a bubbling, laughing pool,  
 Whence panting hounds lapped waters cool. 16480  
 Their quivers, and their bows unstrung,  
 Amid the leaves above them hung,  
 And filled with joy in peace they heard  
 The carol sweet of many a bird,

### 36 THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

**Venus** Perched in the branches overhead.  
**counsels** And then, by amorous longing led,  
**Adonis** Venus her dear companion pressed  
 With glowing kisses to her breast,  
 And taught him how to hunt the wood  
 In suchwise as to her seemed good. 10440

### LXXXVIII

Venus, possessed with boding fear,  
 Doth counsel her Adonis dear,  
 That he in nowise should pursue  
 Fierce beasts, lest she his death may rue.

#### *Venus counsels Adonis.*

**D**EAR friend, when you with pack unleasht  
 Arouse some noble woodland beast,  
 Which hath nor wit nor will to fight,  
 But forthwith takes to hasty flight,  
 Pursue it well and hardily;  
 But if some quarries fierce there be, 10450  
 Who tusks or horns against you turn,  
 Engage you not in combat stern  
 And perilous, but show you slack  
 Towards all that fear not thy attack,  
 For 'gainst rude beasts of savage strain  
 Full oft is desperate courage vain,  
 And mortal proves the combat when  
 At bay they pit them against men.  
 Roebuck and goats, young stags and hinds,  
 And harmless game of lesser kinds, 10460  
 Are such as I would have you chase,  
 With blithesome heart and gladsome face.

But wild boars, dight with deadly tooth,  
 Bears, wolves, and lions, void of ruth;  
 Pursue not—I forbid it you,  
 For they defend themselves and strew  
 The dogs around them, maimed or dead,  
 And many a hunter bold hath bled  
 'Neath their attack, and rued the day  
 He sought to make such foes his prey. 16470  
 O list my ardent prayer, for I  
 Were reft of light if you should die.

Adonis  
 heeds not

Thus lovingly doth Venus scold  
 Adonis, praying him to hold  
 Fast fixed in memory all she saith,  
 Lest in the woodland find he death.  
 Adonis but a careless ear  
 Afforded to his leman dear;  
 Whether or true or false might be  
 Her words, while seeming to agree, 16480  
 He heeded them no single straw.  
 In vain she strives 'neath love's sweet law  
 To bring his will—he heeds her not,  
 Nor for her warning cares one jot.  
 He for his scorn did dearly pay  
 With life, when Venus was away,  
 Too far to lend him timely aid,  
 And long 'twas ere her tears were stayed.

One day he chased a furious boar,  
 The which he deemed to triumph o'er 16490  
 And carve on board, but out, alas!  
 Nor killed, nor carved by him it was,

### 38 THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

**Heed** For in his rage, the angry beast  
**Love's** Turned on the hunter, and ne'er ceased  
**warnings** His fury till his tusks had rent  
 Adonis' thigh, whose life was shent.

Fair sirs, what thing soe'er may be,  
 From this example learn may ye,  
 That those who sweethearts' words despise  
 Approve themselves aught else but wise, 16500  
 For well behoveth it, their rede  
 As words of Holy Writ to heed.  
 Swear they that love for you they foster?  
 Believe them like the paternoster.  
 To credit them ne'er hesitate,  
 But to dame Reason show the gate.  
 Nay, though an oath on crucifix  
 She sware to you—despise her tricks—  
 For had Adonis but believed  
 His love, much longer had he lived. 16510

When they together, little coy,  
 Had spent long hours in loving joy,  
 To Cythera once more they made  
 Their way. Then ere yet rearrayed  
 Was Venus, forth the heralds tell  
 From point to end how all befell.

Cried Venus: Ne'er shall Jealousy  
 A castle keep 'gainst Love and me,  
 The guardians will I burn with fire,  
 Unless both keys and fort entire 16520  
 They yield, or soon my torch and bow  
 Will men account mere sticks, I trow.



## LXXXIX

How eight young doves the glorious car  
 Of Venus bore to where afar  
 Her son's great hosting was arrayed,  
 And how she brought him speedy aid.

**T**HEN Venus bade her suite with care  
 Her chariot, golden wrought, prepare,  
 For ne'er with miry ways she deals.  
 But her bright car, whose glittering wheels 16580  
 Are set with fairest orient pearls,  
 A train of doves through ether whirls.  
 From out her dove-cot chosen are they,  
 Pink-footed, but of plumage grey.  
 In twink of eye the car is dight,  
 And Venus setteth forth to fight  
 Her battle against Chastity.  
 The well-trained birds one moment try  
 Their wings, and then the air they beat  
 Untiringly, till rest their feet 16540  
 Where lies the host. Venus descends  
 From out her chariot, and straight wends  
 Her son to meet her, who that day  
 The late-made truce had cast away,  
 For Love soon proved that little loth  
 Was he to break his faith and troth.

Love  
 breaks  
 the truce

## XC

The host, with will the fort to take,  
 Against it fierce assault doth make,  
 Yet hath the god but small success,  
 Though fight his troops with hardiness, 10550  
 For those within resistance stout  
 Make to assailants from without.

The fort  
 attacked

**T**HEN the two hosts their fury spend,  
 Attacking these, while those defend.  
 Labours the mighty mangonel,  
 Casting great rocks, with purpose fell,  
 Against the walls, whose guardians make  
 Stout wattled palisades, to break  
 The force thereof, with limber wood  
 From Danger's thickets deftly hewed. 10560  
 Against them the besiegers send  
 Great flights of keen-barbed arrows, penned  
 With earnest vows and giftings fair,  
 Which hope they in the end will bear  
 Good recompense, for every shaft  
 Hath graven on its polished haft  
 Fair promises, and each steel head  
 Is with strong oath or vow bestead.  
 But well the guardians know the charge  
 To parry, covering each with targe 10570  
 His body, which might well resist  
 The deadliest shaft that ever hissed  
 In air, for made were they of wood  
 From Danger's forests, gnarled and good—  
 'Gainst them were keenest arrows vain.

As thus the combat goes amain,

Cupid towards his mother flies,  
Declares his perilous state, and cries  
On her for help to break the wall.

The  
vow of  
Venus

*Venus.*

Exclaims she: May foul death befall 16580  
The very heart and soul of me  
If I, despite of Jealousy,  
Permit that of a woman's heart ✕  
Cold Chastity claim chiefest part,  
'Too oft she brings me pain and care.  
Fair son, see thou that all men swear  
Within your pleasant paths to tread.

*The God of Love.*

Right willingly, God Cupid said;  
No living man shall be acclaimed  
F'or noble, or as gentle named 16590  
Who loveth not, or hath not been  
By damsel's loving eyes beseen.  
What grief! to know some mortals live  
Who shun the joys 'tis mine to give;  
Casting my dear delights away,  
But they therefor shall smartly pay!  
All those I hate, who love me not,  
And dark and drear will make their lot.  
Of such men will I far and wide  
Complain, nor my displeasure hide 16600  
Or cloak, but will in many a mode  
Lay on their backs some grievous load

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D

## 42 THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

**Love's** Until I have my vengeance spent,  
**joys** And they avow them penitent,  
 Or sink beneath my hate and scorn.  
 A curse on those of Adam born  
 Who dare to cross my sovereign will,  
 Their very life-blood will I spill,  
 Should they reject my dear delight !  
 Yea, should some show me such despite 16610  
 As fell me to the earth with blows,  
 They'd do me no more hurt than  
 those.

I am not mortal, mother mine,  
 But if it were so, I opine  
 That 'neath such misery soon should I  
 Wither and perish utterly.  
 For if my pleasures men gave o'er  
 To me were left then nothing more  
 Saving my body and attire,  
 My bow and chaplet ; all the fire 16620  
 Of love extinct, then were men's power  
 Of joyance dead, woe worth the hour !  
 For counting me of none avail  
 They must beneath life's burden fail ;  
 For where could mortal happier be  
 Than wrapt in fond arms lovingly ?

### *The Author.*

Straightway that oath, the host all swore,  
 And, that it might be made more  
 sure,  
 In place of relics brought they rows  
 Of quivers, arrows, pikes and bows, 16630

And all Love's implements of war,  
And cried :

The  
barons'  
oath

*The Barons of the host with one voice.*

Are these not better far  
Than relics? Upon them will we  
Make oath and pledge most solemnly ;  
If on such things false oaths we swear  
Our credit lost for ever were.

*The Author.*

They swore on these, and nought beside,  
For therein did their hearts confide,  
And true their oath was, as might be  
Sworn on the Holy Trinity.

10640

# XCI

How Nature's stithy doth supply  
Earth's sons and daughters constantly,  
For fear the race of men were spent,  
If thereof proved she negligent.

AND while the barons rent the air  
With shouts, as this great oath they swear,  
Nature, who tendeth everything  
That lives 'neath heaven's blue sheltering,  
Into her workshop entered straight,  
Where swinketh she both rathe and late, 16650  
To forge such pieces as may be  
Used for the continuity

#### 44 THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

**Nature's** Of life ; for she doth mould things so  
**method** That ne'er shall any species know  
 The power of death, but as one dies  
 Forthwith another may arise  
 To fill his place. In vain doth death  
 With hurrying footsteps spend his breath ;  
 So closely Nature followeth him,  
 That if some few are by his grim 16660  
 And massive club destroyed who are  
 His due, (for some of them no bar  
 Oppose to him, but readily  
 Give welcome wheresoe'er they be,  
 Wasting themselves in common course,  
 While others through their waste gain  
 force)  
 When he perchance doth fondly think  
 That one and all his cup must drink,  
 He is deceived, for though he catch  
 One here, another there doth hatch, 16670  
 This one he taketh on the right,  
 But on the left a new one's dight.  
 If Death perchance the father kill,  
 Mother, or son, or daughter still  
 Remain, though they the father dead  
 Have seen, and when their day is sped,  
 They too must fall beneath death's power,  
 Nought stays the inevitable hour ;  
 Nor subtlest leechdom, vow, nor prayer.  
 Nephews and nieces straightway fare 16680  
 Afar, with hurrying feet, upbuoyed  
 With hope they may dread death avoid.  
 One doth him to the dance betake,  
 Another doth the minster make

His refuge, and a third the school,	
While a fourth bends him 'neath the rule	
Of merchandise, or arts, which he	
Perchance had studied formerly.	
And some will chase off care with fine	
Luxurious meats and luscious wine,	16690
While others with desire to fly	
From death or moveless destiny,	
You may on prancing steeds behold,	
Their stirrups bright with glistening gold ;	
'Thinking that thus they may escape	
More speedily Death's grisly shape.	
Another on frail planks doth set	
His hope, and trusts thereby to get	
O'er sea, if so the stars avail	
To guide his boat and help him sail	16700
Afar from death. Another tries	
By base hypocrisy and lies	
'Neath guise of prayer to give the slip	
To death when he his foot would trip ;	
'Though of a truth must all men know	
His life by what his actions show,	
And thus it is that all men try	
Vainly the grip of Death to fly.	

None  
escape  
Death

But he, with hideous blackened face,	
To all these fugitives gives chase,	10
Until he treadeth on their heels,	
And each in turn his weapon feels	
At ten years, twenty, or two score,	
Or may be double that or more,	
Nay, some to four score years and ten	
Escape, or five score, but all men	

The His foot doth overtake at last,  
 Phoenix And though it seem as though he passed  
 Some few, he turneth him again  
 To strike them down ; futile and vain 16720  
 Is leechcraft in the end, each one  
 He catcheth when his course is run.  
 Nay, even the great physicians he  
 Doth seize, how skilled soe'er they be.  
 Hippocrates and Galen eke,  
 Though strong of wit, 'gainst death were weak.  
 Constantine, Rasis, Avicene,  
 All bowed 'neath his strong rule, I ween,  
 For far though men may run, Death will  
 With tireless foot run further still, 16730  
 For he, whom nought can satisfy,  
 Will as voracious glutton try  
 All to devour, and therefore he  
 Pursues them over land and sea.  
 Yet howsoever much he strive,  
 He ne'er all living things can drive  
 At once within his net, nor shape  
 His snares so well that none escape.  
 For if but only one remain,  
 That one will soon bring forth again ; 16740  
 And this we through the Phoenix know,  
 Which, though but one, anew doth grow  
 Unerringly.

On all the earth  
 One Phoenix only comes to birth  
 In five-and-twenty score of years ;  
 And when the wondrous creature nears  
 Its end, it builds a funeral pyre  
 Of spices sweet, then setteth fire



# THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE 47

Thereto, and burns itself to dust,  
 In such wise, as 'twould seem it must  
 Perish, but straight doth it arise  
 From out its ashes and bright skies  
 Seeketh once more, and so 'tis done  
 By God's behest, that soon as one  
 Is dead, forthwith Dame Nature straight  
 To fill its place doth one create  
 Unceasingly, for did she not  
 The species must be sped, I wot,  
 And so 'twould come about, I ween,  
 No Phoenix in the world were seen. 16760  
 But as 'tis, though a thousand died,  
 Nature another doth provide.  
 And in likewise doth everything  
 That dies, through Nature once more  
     spring  
 To life anew. Beneath the moon  
 Whatever fails shall late or soon  
 Revive if only one remain  
 From whence the race new life may gain,  
 For Nature, pitiful and good,  
 Abhors and hates Death's envious mood, 16770  
 Who ruthlessly would mar and break  
 The fairest thing her skill doth make,  
 And seeing nought more fair can be,  
 Her own form ever stampeth she  
 On all her works, as men who mint  
 New coins, put on them their imprint,  
 And form and colour give to each;  
 And thereto striveth Art to reach  
 In copying Nature's models, though  
 Such perfect work no man can show. 16780

Nature  
 abhors  
 death

Art in-  
ferior to  
Nature

Art, falling on his knees before  
 Dame Nature humbly doth implore,  
 Beseech, and earnestly require  
 In suppliant form, that she inspire  
 His heart, if but in small degree,  
 How he may copy carefully  
 Her handiwork, and reproduce  
 Its form, for ornament or use,  
 Acknowledging inferior far  
 His works to be than Nature's are. 16790  
 Each method Art doth closely watch  
 And painfully essay to catch  
 Of Nature's working, as an ape  
 His doings upon man's doth shape;  
 But vainly, vainly, Art may try  
 To come near Nature's mastery.  
 To nought that through man's hand doth  
 live  
 Can he her touch supernal give.  
 For Art, though he no labour shirk  
 To imitate great Nature's work, 16800  
 And set his hand to every kind  
 Of thing he may around him find,  
 Of whatsoever sort it be,  
 Painting and decking curiously  
 (And none of all the arts men leave  
 Untried, but paint, dye, carve and weave)  
 Armed warriors on their coursers dight,  
 Adorned and trapped in colours bright,  
 Purple and yellow, green and blue,  
 And many another varied hue; 16810  
 Fair birds that pipe 'mid branches green,  
 And fish in crystal waters seen,

And all the wilding beasts that roam  
In forest haunts, their native home ;  
And flowers and herbs in sunny glades,  
Which merry youths and gladsome maids  
Go forth in pleasant days of spring  
To gather in their wandering :  
Tame birds, and beasts all unafraid,  
And games and dances 'neath the shade, 16820  
And noble dames in vesture fair,  
In metal, wax, or wood with care  
Portrayed, as they in life might stand,  
And lovers clasping hand with hand :  
But ne'er on panel, cloth, or wall,  
Can subtlest art, whate'er befall,  
Make Nature's figures live and move,  
Or speak, or feel joy, grief, or love.

Or if of alchemy Art learn  
So much that he can metals turn 16880  
'To varying colours, ne'er can he  
Work them that they transmuted be,  
Unless he by his skill may lead  
Them back to that whence they proceed,  
Nor working deftly till he die  
Can pierce the subtle mystery  
Of Nature. Nay, that he attain  
The knowledge to transmute again  
Metals to primary estate  
'Twere needful first to calculate 16840  
'Their qualities of tempering  
If he would his elixir bring  
To issue good, and thence produce  
Pure metal for his later use.

**Nature's** But those who wot it best agree  
**mysteries** How great an art is alchemy,  
 And whoso gives thereto his mind  
 In study wondrous things shall find ;  
 For as in every species we  
 Find parts which taken separately 10860  
 Are isolated, yet compose  
 One body when these join with those,  
 And this with that doth ever change  
 Throughout all Nature's varying range,  
 And in such fashion they revolve  
 Till that doth into this resolve  
 Its nature, and they reappear  
 In different guise to what they were,  
 Ere purged and tried.

Behold we not  
 What different form the fern hath got 10860  
 When 'tis by fire to ash reduced,  
 And straightway thence clear glass produced  
 By depuration, as we learn ?  
 And yet we know glass is not fern,  
 And none would say that fern is glass.  
 And when we note the lightning pass  
 Which thunder brings, why do we see  
 Stones from the clouds fall presently  
 Which are not formed of stone at all ?  
 Would we know this we needs must call 10870  
 On learned men, for they alone  
 Can say why vapours turn to stone,  
 And how 'tis things so wide apart  
 Are changed by Nature or man's art.  
 And so may men change metals who  
 Know with their substance what to do,

Drawing the dross apart from gold  
 Till nothing base the metals hold,  
 And brought together then shall be  
 Pure metals by affinity. 16880  
 Fine gold is of its special kind,  
 However Nature hath combined  
 Aught else therewith in divers ways  
 Which 'neath its mother's bosom stays  
 Entombed, till 'tis, when time hath worn  
 Of sulphur and quicksilver born,  
 For so by learned books we're taught.  
 Thence men have knowledge duly sought,  
 And whosoe'er thereby hath found  
 The means these spirits to compound, 16890  
 And cause them so to mix and lie  
 That they no more apart can fly,  
 But in one mass with welding sure  
 Together come, purged clear and pure,  
 And force the sulphur to lie dead,  
 Coloured at will, or white or red,  
 That man shall have, who worketh so,  
 All metals 'neath his power, I trow.  
 And thus of quicksilver, fine gold  
 Those make who perfect knowledge hold 16900  
 Of alchemy, and colour add  
 And weight, through things that may be had  
 At little cost, and precious stones  
 From gold men make, whose worth atones  
 For all the labour.

In likewise

Men may with subtle art devise  
 How to pure silver may be turned  
 All baser metals, when they've learned

## 52 THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

**Nature's** By means of drugs, strong, clear, and fine,  
**distress** To bring to end this art divine. 16910  
 But this alone is for the ken  
 Of learned and right worthy men,  
 Who labour hard, nor seek to shirk  
 The perfecting of Nature's work.  
 Quacks and impostors strive in vain,  
 To them her marvels sealed remain.

Then busy Nature, whose desire  
 Is ever to keep bright the fire  
 Of life in all her works, raised high  
 Her voice and wept so plaintively, 16920  
 That not a piteous heart and tender  
 Beats but would fain its tribute render  
 To her deep grief, the which so keen  
 And deep was for one fault I ween,  
 That prompting strong, she felt to shirk  
 Her duties and forego her work,  
 But that she greatly feared offence  
 To give her lord by indolence.  
 It little needs to seek what thing  
 Upon her heart such suffering 16930  
 And misery brought. Gladly would I  
 Apply myself ententively  
 All Nature to describe to you  
 Deemed I my wit sufficed thereto.  
 My wit! alas! what have I said?  
 For none of those wise men, long dead,  
 Great Aristotle or Plato,  
 Who knew far more than most men know,  
 Either by written word or speech,  
 Could unto that great secret reach; 16940

Albus, or Ptolemy, or Euclid,  
 From whom scarce anything was hid,  
 In vain might exercise their wit,  
 'Therefrom would grow small benefit,  
 'Though they should boldly undertake  
 Research profound and long to make.  
 Nay, e'en Pygmalion might essay  
 In vain her fairness to portray;  
 Parrhasius and Apelles eke,  
 Great masters both, might vainly seek  
 Her wondrous beauties to express,  
 And show forth all her loveliness;  
 Nor Polycletus nor Myron  
 Her faultless form by art have shown.

The  
 secrets  
 of Nature

16050

## XCII

How Zeuxis, famed of old, did try  
 To paint fair Nature perfectly;  
 And on his glorious task intent  
 Great care and labour freely spent.

**Z**EUXIS, the painter, strove in vain,  
 'That he might Nature's skill attain, 16060  
 Who one time did for models take  
 Five virgins, who for beauty's sake  
 Had all comparison defied,  
 (Although their equals far and wide  
 Were sought, who for perfection rare  
 Of body might with them compare,)  
 When would he for the temple paint  
 A picture that might scorn complaint

**Nature  
beyond  
imitation**

Or question, and before him stood  
The five all unadorned and nude  
As Venus' self, that he in them  
Might seek to spy defect or wem,  
Whether of body, limbs, or skin,  
And signally he failed therein,  
As all may read in Tully's book  
Of rhetoric, who care to look  
Within its pages. Zeuxis nought  
Could equal these whenso he sought,  
Though in the art of painting he  
To no man ever bowed the knee,  
So deft is Nature's subtle skill,  
Who doth the earth with fairness fill.  
Zeuxis, nor any other who  
Hath e'er been born could reach  
thereto,  
How well soe'er they understood  
All Nature's loveliness, and would  
Employ their hands to imitate  
Her works—thereof enamorate.  
For God alone it is who can  
Such glories work, not puny man.  
Most gladly would I, dared I hope,  
Such matters stood within my scope,  
Describe all Nature unto you,  
But power of words would lack thereto,  
Though to that task, surhuman I,  
Addressed my spirit earnestly  
A hundred times: nay, nay, far more  
Than I shall e'er gain credit for;  
Presumption were it most extreme  
That I should ever dare to dream



That such a mighty work could be  
 Achieved by my capacity.  
 Far better were it I had died  
 Than venture to indulge such pride  
 As think that I could comprehend,  
 For all the pains I might expend,  
 Fair Nature's glorious paradise—  
 Beyond all words—past thought of price ;  
 Nor though aloft my thoughts had flown,  
 That I should dare to write thereon ; 17010  
 No—in my spirit so am I  
 Abashed, that fear my tongue doth tie,  
 And so doth shame my being steep,  
 That silence it behoves me keep ;  
 For e'en as more and more I think  
 Of Nature's loveliness, I shrink  
 From lauding, in my faltering phrase,  
 Her perfect works and wondrous ways.

Nature  
 surpasses  
 all  
 thought

When God, whose glory is above  
 All measurement, in bounteous love 17020  
 Created Nature, he did make  
 Of her a fountain (whence should break  
 Unceasingly a thousand rills)  
 Of beauty, which the whole world fills.  
 This fount wells ever and cannot  
 By time be wasted as I wot,  
 More high than heaven, and than the sea  
 More deep, 'tis called immensity.  
 How then describe that body or  
 That countenance, that hath far more 17030  
 Of beauty than the fleur-de-lis,  
 Which we new blown in May-tide see ?

## 56 THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

**Nature's** The rose is not more red, more white  
**repent-** No snow which clads the mountain height,  
**ance** But 'tis a folly to compare  
 That which beyond all thought is fair,  
 And Nature's beauty doth o'ergero  
 All that man's heart or mind can know.

When Nature heard the Barons swear  
 Their solemn oath, it brought to her 17040  
 Great solace for the woe that weighed  
 Her heart down, yet scarce unafraid  
 She cried :

*Nature.*

Alas ! what have I done ?  
 On me returns, unhappy one !  
 The memory of a fault that I  
 Committed in days long gone by  
 When first this beauteous world was made,  
 And justly had by penance paid  
 Therefor, since fain am I to win  
 Pardon for my unwitting sin. 17050  
 Alas ! how many a thousand time  
 Must I repent me of my crime !  
 How have I then my pains employed ?  
 Am I of wit so far devoid,  
 That I who thought my friends to serve,  
 And thence their praise and thanks  
     deserve,  
 Must yet acknowledge in the end  
 That 'tis my foes whom I befriend ?  
 My kindness brings me but distress.

*The Author.*

Then to her priest doth she confess,  
 Who in her chapel hastes to say  
 The mass, although in no new way,  
 For alway had he service due  
 Performed, since he was priest thereto.  
 Boldly, in place of other mass,  
 The priest, whose knowledge doth surpass  
 All others, called before the queen  
 Each creature that hath ever been  
 Born in this mortal world, then writ  
 Within his book whate'er of it  
 Great Nature unto him revealed,  
 Which else had been a mystery sealed.

17060 Nature's  
confes-  
sion

17070

## XCIII

This tells how Nature, Goddess sweet,  
 Knelt low at her confessor's feet ;  
 Who gently bid her calm her fears,  
 Comfort her heart, and dry her tears.

**G**ENIUS, quoth she, my gentle priest,  
 Master o'er greatest as o'er least  
 Of all created things, and who  
 Directs and charges them to do  
 Such works as are to them assigned,  
 Each one according to his kind,  
 Now do I feel remorse oppress  
 My spirit, and would fain confess  
 A folly that my heart hath riven,  
 And yet remaineth unforgiven.

17080

*Genius.*

**Grief** Queen of the world, quick answered he,  
**avails not** Before whose face all bow the knee,  
 If aught doth rob your heart of peace,  
 Whereof you fain would find release, 17090  
 I pray you put full trust in me.  
 What thing soe'er the matter be,  
 Of brightest joy, or darkest grief,  
 You may from me gain full relief;  
 Confess to me whate'er you will  
 And your desire will I fulfil,  
 And all within my province do  
 To help, to guide, to succour you,  
 'The while I keep your counsel hid,  
 Fast locked, if secrecy you bid. 17100  
 And should you absolution ask,  
 To grant it were my grateful task,  
 But first, from tears your eyelids keep.

*Nature.*

Alas! quoth she, if now I weep,  
 Good Genius, that small marvel is.

*Genius.*

Before all else I counsel this,  
 Dear mistress, that you dry your tears,  
 Then if your heart confession cheers,  
 Tell me at full whatever thing  
 It is that doth thy spirit wring. 17110

Great must your grief be, as I trow,  
For noble hearts will ne'er allow  
Slight woes to wear them, vile must be  
'The wretch who works you misery.  
But oft a woman's heart will fire  
For smallest cause with bitterest ire.

Virgil and  
Solomon

To Virgil I the case refer,  
Who well knew woman's character.  
A woman's heart is nowise stable,  
Saith he, but ever variable, 17120  
Capricious, and by anger led.  
And Solomon declares her head  
Is than an angry serpent's worse,  
Which merited God's primal curse.  
Nought else, saith he, is so with spite  
Possessed, and ne'er hath man aright  
Described in rathe, or later time  
Her evil ways in prose or rhyme.  
And Titus Livius, (who well knew  
'The modes and manners through and  
through 17180  
Of women, and their minds perverse,)  
In language vigorous and terse  
Declares, he best succeeds who tries  
To warp their minds with japes and lies;  
So foolish are they and unstable,  
That truth they hate, but cling to fable.  
And in the Holy Scripture we  
'This judgment plainly writ may see:  
That at the bottom of all vice  
In women is foul avarice. 17140

**Value of**    The man who trusteth to his wife  
**silence**    His secrets, risks both fame and life,  
 For never man of woman born,  
 But sot, or one of wit forlorn,  
 Would to a woman e'er reveal  
 A thing 'twere prudent to conceal,  
 Lest he should hear it back again.  
 Much better had one flee to Spain  
 Than trust unto a woman's care  
 A secret, e'en though debonair 17150  
 And loyal she be.    Nor any act  
 That best were hid, if he have tact,  
 Will any man perform and do  
 In woman's presence, or he'll rue.  
 For though it peril his estate  
 Or life, she will or soon or late,  
 However long she may delay,  
 His secret counselling betray  
 And tell, though no one should demand 17160  
 Or seek the matter at her hand.  
 Nought can a woman's silence buy,  
 For surely she'd expect to die  
 If she her tongue should curb, yea though  
 She knew great peril thence must grow.  
 And whoso tells some deadly thing  
 To any woman, soon will bring  
 Vengeance upon him if he dare  
 His hand lift in chastising her  
 Once only, soon as e'er the blow  
 She feels, she'll let the whole world 1717  
 know  
 His secret, and loud-voiced proclaim  
 Her knowledge, though it blast his name.

<p>The man who trusts a woman's lost,          Peace of his life will be the cost.          Know you what such an one doth do?          He binds his arms, and shutteth to          His mouth, for if he dare to scold          Her foolish ways, or maketh bold          To raise his arm in chastisement          'Gainst her but once, forthwith were spent 17180          Her fury on him, and if he          Deserveth death, straightway will she          Unto the handling of the grim          Relentless judge deliver him,          Or through assassin's hand will bring          His death to pass, by blade or string.</p>	<p><b>Trust not          women</b></p>
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XCIV

<p>Herein much labour have I spent          With honest purpose and intent,          Of showing forth to every man          How to defend him from the ban          Of taking such a mate as may          His goods despoil and life betray.</p>	<p>17100</p>
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<p><b>B</b>UT if some fool repose his head,          Pillowed beside his wife in bed,          Where scarce he dares to hope for sleep,          Since of some crime he fears to reap          Ill consequence or death if he          By evil chance betrayed should be,          And therefore wallows, turns, and sighs,          In vain attempt to close his eyes,</p>	<p>17200</p>
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## 62 THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

**The wheedling wife** With fawning voice towards him turns  
His wife, who for his secret yearns,  
Nurses his head betwixt her breasts,

*The wife speaks to her husband.*

And saith : Your restlessness attests  
Dear man, some grief ; what makes you sigh  
And toss about uneasily ?  
May we not feel, as lie we here,  
Secure from dread or irksome fear ?  
Of all the world, the special twain  
'Twixt whom sweet confidence should reign 17210  
We well may be with reason reckoned,  
You as the first, and I the second :  
No pair of hearts than ours could be  
Together knit more lovingly ;  
My hands have made secure the door,  
Thick are walls, and stout the floor,  
The rafter beams are set on high  
And through the windows none can spy,  
Seeing that we well hidden are  
Therefrom, and with strong shutter bar 17220  
They're fastened that could nowise stray  
Our secret thence, whate'er we say.  
Nay here, unless with warning noise  
Some rash rude hand the door destroys,  
We're sure and safe from all unkind  
Disturbance, save of boisterous wind.  
Briefly, you need in nowise fear  
That any living soul can hear  
Your voice except myself, and I  
Therefore implore you piteously 17230



By all our love, amain you tell  
Your wife what drags your soul to hell.

A wife's  
plea

*The Husband.*

Fore God! the thing that doth oppress  
My mind, quoth he, with heaviness,  
Had better far be left unsaid.

*The Wife.*

Alas! dear husband, are you wed  
To one whose counsel you reject  
As of disloyalty suspect?  
When we in holy wedlock came  
Together in the precious name 17240  
Of Jesu Christ he was to us  
Of his sweet grace so generous,  
That closed within the sacred mesh  
Of marriage are we but one flesh:  
And seen that thus one flesh are we  
By every right we ought to be  
In no one single thing apart  
But have betwixt the twain one heart.  
My heart is yours, by that same sign  
Your heart should be all wholly mine, 17250  
Nor should its inmost chambers hold  
A secret thought or wish untold  
To her who loves you. T'herefore say  
To me, whate'er of grief, I pray,  
Afflicts you, free from all deceit,  
For till your heart with mine doth beat

## 64 THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

Where-fore mis-trust  
 T will know no peace. If you refuse,  
 Alas! 'twill then be clear I lose  
 Your confidence, but well I know  
 What tender love for me doth flow 17260  
 Through all your being when I hear  
 You say, 'Sweet love' and 'Sister dear.'  
 And 'gainst whom is it that you guard  
 This chestnut, kept with watch and  
 ward?  
 For if you hide from me your grief  
 'Twould seem as though a traitor thief  
 You but esteem me—I, who ne'er  
 From that first day 'twas mine to share  
 Your name, concealed, whate'er betid,  
 The secret thought my bosom hid, 17270  
 But leaving father dear, and mother,  
 Uncles and cousins, sister, brother,  
 On you alone do I depend  
 My one relation, love, and friend.  
 Forsooth, a sad exchange I've made  
 If you should show yourself afraid  
 To trust me, though I ne'ertheless  
 Love you with fondest tenderness.  
 But no more than a garden leek  
 Can you esteem me, if you seek 17280  
 This trouble from me to withhold,  
 Possessed with fear lest it be told  
 Abroad. By Christ, our Lord in heaven!  
 Into whose hands could it be given  
 So safely? Think the matter out,  
 And if my loyalty you doubt,  
 My body's in your power to do  
 Therewith whatever pleaseth you,

And if that pledge sufficeth not,  
 What more you'd have I fain would wot. 17290  
 Would you assign me place below  
 My women friends around, who know  
 Their husbands' secrets? Other men  
 Speak freely to their spouses when  
 In bed o' nights with them they lie,  
 Telling them all their privy  
 As openly, to say the least,  
 As though they shrived them with their priest.  
 All this I know for gospel truth  
 Since I from their own mouths, forsooth, 17300  
 Have learned things many a time when fain  
 Were they, in confidential strain,  
 To tell when all alone we've been  
 The secrets they have heard and seen.  
 But you would do me grievous wrong  
 Should you suppose that I belong  
 To women of such sort, for I  
 Ne'er blab or speak unseasonably.  
 So am I of my body too,  
 Fore God and man, fair-lived and true. 17310  
 You never heard that any one  
 With me adultery had done,  
 Or if some one with ill intent  
 Said so—a lie did he invent.  
 Have you not often proved me well?  
 And can you aught against me tell?

Wed-  
 lock's  
 oath

Remember you, fair sir, I pray,  
 The oath that on our wedding-day  
 You pledged to me? The offering  
 You then made of a wedding-ring 17320

## 66 THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

**Secresy  
promised** I now look back on with surprise,  
 Knowing your vows for barefaced lies.  
 If you to trust my faith are loth,  
 Why sware you then that spousal troth?  
 I charge you by that oath to say  
 What thing it is you hide away  
 In secret from me. Let me know  
 This once what palls your spirit so,  
 And by St. Peter it shall sleep  
 With me as safely as if deep 17830  
 'Twere buried 'neath a pile of stone.  
 I should but for a fool be known  
 If out my lips a single word  
 Were to your hurt or damage heard;  
 Moreover, 'twould my lineage shame,  
 Whereof I'm proud to guard the fame,  
 And cast on me disgrace so great  
 That death I'd count a worthier fate.  
 A saying is there, just and true,  
 That whoso cuts his nose atwo 17840  
 For ever after shames his face:  
 If faith in God still find a place  
 Within your heart, confide to me  
 Your grief, or you my death will be.

*Genius.*

Then with her head and breast laid bare  
 No amorous dalliance doth she spare,  
 Nor pleadings of false tears she misses,  
 With treacherous smiles and Judas kisses.

## XCV

The husband lets the cord around  
 His neck be by his folly bound, 17350  
 Telling his secret to his wife—  
 Her soul she loses—he his life.

**T**HEN doth the fool to her relate  
 His secret, and thereby his fate  
 Is sealed—in peril is his head,  
 His words repents he, scarcely said,  
 But once a word has taken wing,  
 'Tis lost past chance of cancelling.  
 Forthwith he prays his wife that she  
 Will keep her tongue most rigidly, 17360  
 For thrice more anxious is he now  
 Than when thereof she nought did trow,  
 Although most solemnly she swears  
 That safely she his secret shares.  
 'The idiot! What could he expect?  
 By silence failed he to protect  
 Himself, and now would he restrain  
 His wife! Oh foolish hope, and vain!  
 Now hath the dame the upper hand,  
 Assured no more will he withstand 17370  
 Her thousand whims, or dare to scold,  
 For hers 'tis now the whip to hold,  
 And meekly may he still his tongue,  
 For o'er his reign the knell is rung.  
 'Tis possible that she may keep  
 Silence awhile, nor seek to reap  
 Advantage till some feud arise  
 Betwixt them, which her temper tries

The  
 husband  
 blabs

## 68 THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

**Beware of women** Too sorely, but, so doing, she  
Will struggle most unwillingly  
Against the promptings of her heart,  
Which burns with longing to impart  
The tale. 17380

Now whoso wisheth good  
'To men will tell this all abroad,  
For well 'twould be if far and wide  
'Twere known, to serve as signal-guide  
Against great peril. 'Twill displease  
Women who love to spite and tease  
Their husbands, but sound truth should not  
Be pared or pruned one single jot. 17390

Fair sirs, of womankind beware ;  
If you for soul or body care,  
Speak not, nor act you in such wise  
As layeth bare to woman's eyes  
The things your hearts hold secretly.  
Fly! fly! I bid you, fly! fly! fly!  
Fly womankind, if you would live  
In safety. I this counsel give,  
Free of all afterthought and guile ;  
But note you Virgil's words the while, 17400  
Which to your hearts 'twere well to take  
And plant them there for safety's sake.  
Children, who fragrant flowrets cull,  
And rosy-ripe sweet strawberries pull,  
Keep ever in your memories  
That 'neath their leaves the serpent lies.  
Flee then, O children, lest he sting  
On you the poison of his sting,  
When come ye nigh his lair.

	And so,	Woman's
Young folk, as through the world ye go	17410	value
Agathering fruits and flowrets sweet,		
Beware the serpent 'neath your feet,		
Which lurketh venomous and cold,		
An adder which doth venom hold		
Until sit moment she perceives		
To spit it forth from 'twixt the leaves,		
Harming and wounding mortally ;		
Fly from her, children, haste to fly.		
For such vile venom bears the beast,		
That if with head or tail the least	17420	
Of touches she your body gives,		
'Tis death, for poison in her lives,		
And those who once that virus feel,		
No leech can save, no art can heal ;		
In vain for remedy he yearns		
Within whose veins the venom burns,		
One medicine alone hath might		
To heal the wound—'tis instant flight.		

But think you not from what I say	
Hereof, I'd have you cast away	17480
All women's love, nor be you led	
To think no man I'd have to wed,	
Or woman's company enjoy.	
Nay, I exhort you be not coy,	
Fair dames and damosels to prize,	
But trick them forth in braveries	
From head to foot, and give them fair	
And courteous greeting wheresoe'er	
They cross your life-path, if you would	
The ravages of death make good ;	17440

## 70 THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

House- For 'tis through them that lineage  
wifery Is carried on from age to age.  
But nowise let it so betide  
They secrets learn 'twere well to hide.  
Permit it that they go and come,  
And busy them with house and home,  
And that with care they buy and sell,  
Suffer them all the tale to tell  
Of stock and store, as it may be,  
Of household stuff and husbandry. 17450  
Or, if some useful trade they know,  
Fail not to set them thereunto.  
But let them nothing wot or see  
Of things demanding secrecy.  
For, if in some unguarded hour  
You put you 'neath a woman's power,  
Most bitterly will you repent  
Your folly ere the day be spent.  
In Holy Scripture is it said,  
That when the wife becomes the head, 17460  
Against her husband will she run  
Whate'er by him be said or done.  
But, watch you well from day to day,  
Your house falls not in evil way,  
'Neath trustiest guard oft faileth pelf,  
The wise man guards his goods himself.

And you who hold your lemans dear,  
Show you towards them gracious cheer,  
And suffer them to have some hand  
In common cares they understand. 17470  
But if you prudent are and wise,  
When 'twixt your arms your minion lies,



And clips you close with fondling kiss,  
 Silence your one great safeguard is,  
 (Then is the time to keep your tongue,  
 For nought of good, and much of wrong  
 Betides of secrets then made known,)  
 Or soon you'll find your sweetling grown  
 Proud and imperious, prone to grasp  
 At power, and venomous as an asp. 17480  
 But when a fool is in such case,  
 And feels sweet kisses on his face  
 And lips, and whiles the time away  
 With gestings soft and amorous play,  
 He nought doth know to keep and hide  
 His secrets, but throws open wide  
 His heart. Fond, foolish husbands oft  
 Let slip their tongues for clippings soft,  
 And thereof follows many an ill  
 Which well life's cup with dole may fill. 17490

Samson  
 and  
 Dalila

Dalila with deceitful smile  
 And venomed kisses did beguile  
 The mighty Samson, warrior great,  
 In her false lap to rest his pate  
 In slumber, gentle, soft, and deep,  
 And then with treacherous hand did reap  
 His locks and strength at one fell blow,  
 For when the traitress came to know  
 His secret, which were best kept shut  
 Within his lips, at once she cut 17500  
 His hair, and this befel because,  
 Though strong, a babbling fool he was  
 Further examples in a trice  
 Could I adduce—let this suffice

## 72 THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

Solo-  
mon's  
counsel    The wise King Solomon hath too  
A proverb I commend to you,  
Because, God wot, I love you well :  
Beware lest you your counsel tell,  
Quoth he, to her who on your breast  
Doth sleep, but keep your teeth close pressed 17510  
If peril you would fain avoid,  
Nor find your peaceful days destroyed.  
This should be preached abroad by all  
Who fain would see fair luck befall  
To men—that they should keep close shut  
Their lips, nor faith in women put.  
But this word holdeth not for you,  
Dame Nature, for that ever true  
And loyal is your heart, indeed  
That may we in the Scripture read, 17520  
How God hath set you far above  
All folly, in his boundless love.

### *The Author.*

And thus doth Genius comfort bring  
To Nature by his counselling,  
Exhorting her to dry her tears,  
And cast aside her grief and fears,  
For nought of good can e'er be gained  
By sorrow, nor a heart be fained  
By tears, joy wakes when tears are sped.

When all his mind he thus had said, 17530  
He stayed his mouth from speech or prayer,  
And sat him in the shriving chair

Beside the altar—Nature knelt  
 Adown and full confession spelt.  
 But much it irked the worthy priest  
 When found he that nowise decreased  
 Her grief for aught that he could say,  
 But on the winds were cast away  
 His words. Then gave he silent ear,  
 While she confessed with many a tear  
 Her miseries, and the shrift he heard,  
 I here report you, word for word.

Nature's  
 confes-  
 sion

17540

XCVI

Here note you how, with loving care,  
 Nature doth in confession fare.

WHEN God, whose goodness knows no  
 bound,  
 First made fair earth's most glorious round,  
 Whereof the wondrous plan had been  
 Mirrored by his prevision keen,  
 How everything at last should be  
 In time, from out eternity,  
 (For he from out himself evolved  
 That which should be at last resolved,  
 Since, though he high or low might look,  
 Nought yet was writ in Nature's book  
 From whence he could example take,  
 For heaven and earth were yet to make ;  
 Sun, moon and stars, and air and sea—  
 'Twas chaos in immensity,  
 And all from nothing did create,  
 That God who is himself innate,

17550

17560

VOI.. III.

F

## 74 THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

**God the** Though to this work nought else did move  
**creator** His will, but all-abounding love ;  
 Perfect and pure, past envious strife,  
 Exists he, fount and spring of life,) 17570  
 Athwart infinity of space  
 He made the world and fixed its place ;  
 From out a rude unshapely mass  
 To form and order all did pass  
 Beneath his will ; the parts estranged  
 In perfect symmetry he ranged,  
 And marked and set the bound to each  
 Division, whereto it should reach ;  
 And formed all things in circles so  
 That each one should its function know.  
 Those that should shift, their ways to  
     wend,  
 And others' movement to forefend  
 And hold them fast, and thus each kind  
 Fulfil the work to it assigned.  
 The lighter made he up to fly,  
 The heavier in the centre lie, 17580  
 With medial interposed between.  
 All this by God hath ordered been  
 Aright, both as to time and space.  
 And when he had through bounteous grace  
 Disposed his creatures here and there  
 With perfect knowledge, love, and care,  
 He then my humble heart made fain,  
 Appointing me his chamberlain ;  
 To such high dignity no right  
 I claim, but bless the hand that dight 17590  
 For one unworthy of his care  
 This mansion, spacious, bright and fair.

Wherein his love appointed me  
 His faithful chamberlain to be.  
 His chamberlain! nay, over all  
 He made me vicar general,  
 And constable his own right hand,  
 Whom no man scatheless may withstand.  
 'Though but for his good grace am I  
 Unworthy of such dignity.

Nature  
 God's  
 chamber-  
 lain

17600

God honoureth me as fit to hold  
 Within my hands the chains of gold  
 Which the four elements enlace,  
 And bow they all before my face.  
 On me bestowed he all the things  
 Enclosed within those ruddy rings,  
 Commanding me to watch their fate,  
 And all their forms perpetuate.  
 My laws must all God's work obey,  
 Following where'er I point the way,  
 Forgetting or omitting ne'er,  
 Closely by my commands to fare  
 'Through time to all eternity.  
 And this hath been, and aye shall be  
 Observed, wherever shines the sun,  
 By all my creatures—save but one.

17610

Nought of the heaven may I complain  
 Which wheels him round and round again,  
 And beareth in his circling bright  
 The brilliant stars that gem fair night,  
 Whose virtues are to men more worth  
 Than all the precious stones on earth.  
 To make the whole world glad and gay  
 Forth from the east he takes his way,

17620

## 76 THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

**Course** And never till he reach the west  
**of the** Turneth aside or seeketh rest,  
**heavens** O'ercoming all the circles which  
 Against him work, with will to hitch  
 His movements, and his march retard,  
 But nowise can his course be marred ; 17030  
 For surely will he reappear  
 When round hath rolled the circling  
 year,  
 Thirty-six thousand times in space  
 To come where God first fixed its place,  
 According to the width of track  
 Marked for it by the zodiac.  
 Unerringly doth heaven pursue  
 That course its maker set it to,  
 And therefore it aplanos hight  
 As deviating ne'er one mite : 17040  
 A Greek word 'tis, and means in French  
 A thing that ne'er can err or blench.  
 And though those other heavens no man  
 Hath ever yet been known to scan,  
 I can by Reason prove their state,  
 And all their movements demonstrate.  
 Nor plain I of the planets seven  
 Glowing and sparkling in the heaven,  
 For each one followeth out its course.  
 The moon indeed hath little force 17050  
 On certain days, for then nor clear  
 Nor bright of face doth she appear,  
 But through her double nature 'tis  
 That shows she these obscurities.  
 One portion dark, another bright,  
 At once possessed and void of light,

Sometimes her light seems passed away,  
 For that she nought reflects the ray  
 The sun affords her, but, I trow,  
 Her night o'ercomes the mighty glow 17660  
 He sheds. That I may make this thing  
 More clear, I will before you bring  
 A fair example, which may better  
 Explain my meaning—word and letter.

The  
 moon

Behold you a transparent glass,  
 Through which the sun's rays pierce and pass,  
 If of all substance it should lack  
 Both fore and aft to cast aback  
 His rays, no figures can it throw,  
 Or forms to meet one's eyes, I trow, 17670  
 The rays its mass will intersect,  
 And nought at all therefrom reflect.  
 But if some solid substance you  
 Should put, which rays can pierce not through,  
 Then on the opposing side you'll see  
 Your face reflected perfectly.  
 Or any polished surface take,  
 Dark of itself, or made opaque,  
 So that it casteth back the light,  
 There will you get reflection bright. 17680  
 So with the moon, that portion clear  
 (Like a transparent crystal sphere)  
 The rays of light may not retain,  
 Nor, therefore, casts them back again,  
 But that part of its rounded shape  
 Through which no light can e'er escape,  
 Holds it awhile, and then casts back  
 Bright rays, else earth its light would lack,

## 78 THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

**The** And therefore while one side's obscure,  
**planets** The other shines with radiance pure. 17690

On the moon's darker part we see  
 A figure pictured wondrously  
 Of some most strange outlandish beast ;  
 A serpent 'tis, which towards the east  
 Turneth his tail, the while his head  
 Looks where the sun's bright couch is  
 spread.

Upon his back a tree doth stand,  
 Its branches towards the orient land,  
 Looking as they were upside down,  
 And mounted there a country clown, 17700  
 Who seemeth on his arms to rest,  
 His feet and legs turned towards the west.

And neither of the planets shirk  
 To labour, but do worthy work,  
 So that the seven rest them never,  
 But by their houses twelve they ever  
 Pursue their course, through all degrees,  
 Nor till their work is done take ease,  
 And with desire to make complete  
 Their service, all their steps repeat. 17710  
 Thus through the heavens each day they gain  
 The parts which unto them pertain,  
 And having round the circle run,  
 Resume their work, for ne'er 'tis done ;  
 And so the planets, by their force,  
 Restrain the heaven's unending course,  
 Guarding the elements, or they  
 Must fall to nought and pass away.



'The glorious sun, which 'neath my laws,      **Night's**  
 Is of the daylight spring and cause,      17720 **jewels**  
 From 'mid the heaven his rays doth fling  
 Across the world, as lord and king.  
 Enthroned he sits in splendour dight,  
 'There fixed as of eternal right,  
 Since God, all-powerful, true and wise,  
 His place determined 'mid the skies,  
 For if towards earth more near he came,  
 'Twould parch and shrivel 'neath his flame,  
 And if he farther drew, then lost  
 'The world were through dread ice and  
     frost.      17730

The moon and stars alike but shine  
 Through his great gift of light divine,  
 And thus made beautiful, the Night,  
 For candles chose those jewels bright  
 To deck her hall with whenso she  
 Desires less terrible to be  
 Unto her husband Acheron,  
 Who thereat feels but woe-begone,  
 For liefer would he, if he might,  
 In pitchy darkness clasp his Night,      17740  
 E'en as it happened in days gone by,  
 When first did they together lie  
 In amorous strife, whereof were born  
 The Fury sisters, trine forlorn,  
 Stern ministers of judgments fell  
 Within the gloomy realm of hell.  
 But, whensoever in some dark place,  
 Night looketh on her own dread face,  
 She sees she would too hideous be  
 In unadorned obscurity,      17750

## 80 THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

**The** And therefore loves to deck her hair  
**elements** With sparkling stars of beauty rare,  
 Which gleam and glitter in their spheres,  
 And circle through the unending years,  
 As God the Father's wisdom erst  
 Appointed, ere the earth was cursed.  
 Sweet harmonies amongst them make  
 The stars, and melodies thence take  
 Their spring, and diverse tones we get  
 Therefrom, and in sweet accord set 17700  
 For chant and song of varying kind,  
 Wherein men's hearts fair joyance find.  
 And unto men the stars dispense,  
 By their all-powerful influence,  
 Whate'er befalleth 'neath the moon  
 For good or ill—at night or noon.  
 The stars it is that make appear  
 The elements or dark or clear ;  
 Moisture and drought, and cold and  
 heat,  
 Through them within one body meet 17770  
 As in a coffer, there to cease  
 All difference and exist in peace,  
 Whatever variance between  
 Or this or that foretime had been.  
 Thus these four enemies are taught  
 Agreement, and in accord brought  
 By suitable tempering,  
 As reason may decide each thing,  
 And weld to worthier form and state  
 That which my hand should recreate ; 17780  
 And if things of perfection halt  
 Then must the substance be at fault.

# THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE 81

But those who closely look will see  
 That howsoever good may be  
 The harmony, from day to day  
 The sap of life must waste away,  
 Till Death's sure step will lastly come  
 By nature's course to bear men home  
 As I decree, unless, perchance,  
 Some accident their death advance,  
 And ere the body's strength be worn,  
 From out its house the soul be torn.  
 For 'tis within no mortal's power,  
 When comes the inevitable hour,  
 To stave off death with leech or herb,  
 Or his strong arm one moment curb,  
 Though on the other hand one may  
 Shuffle life's coil ere nature's day.  
 But ere the sap hath run its course  
 Many their lives abridge perforce,  
 Setting their souls from trammels  
 loose

Life  
 wastes

17790

17800

By whelming wave or strangling noose ;  
 Or some great perils undertake  
 Whereon their lives they freely stake,  
 And long before they're tired or sick  
 Of life, get burned or buried quick.  
 Or swift destruction have men won  
 Through some rash act of folly done,  
 Or else by foes are some entrapped  
 To death, for oft times hath it happed  
 That men have others put to sword,  
 Or slain with poison-cup or cord ;  
 And many have lain on death's cold bed  
 Too rathe, through life unwisely led,

17810

## 82 THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

Life often  
shortened

T'oo much of vigil-watch or sleep,  
 Labouring too hard, or drinking deep,  
 Getting too fat or eke too thin,  
 (For men in all these ways may sin,)  
 Going too long devoid of food,  
 Or doing what were well withstood, 17820  
 Being o'erburdened with miscase  
 Through seeking joys a wise man flees,  
 Loving too well good meat and drink,  
 Then suddenly from food to shrink,  
 As clearly shown when rash folk range  
 From heat to cold with sudden change;  
 Then health foregone and life ill spent  
 Too late men turn them to repent,  
 And many a one who well trod ways 17880  
 Hath left, thereby hath clipped his days.  
 For sudden change by Nature is  
 Abhorred, and oft I show men this  
 By leaving those who violate  
 My laws to die, nor heed their fate.  
 But howsoever I lament  
 When men incur the punishment  
 Of death too soon, I yet confess  
 That greater far is my distress  
 When I perceive them on life's road  
 Toiling beneath a cruel load 17840  
 Of dire disease, which ne'er had been  
 Their lot, had they but earlier seen,  
 That riot and excess must breed  
 A host of miseries that lead  
 To death much sooner than should be,  
 If turned they not deaf ear to me.

## XCVII

Nature relates what griefs and cares  
She for the sake of mankind bears.

EMPEDOCLES but evil sped  
For all the learned books he read,  
And the philosophy that he  
Studied but made him melancholy,  
And therefore death he dreaded nought,  
But in the depths of Etna sought  
His end, feet bound, with will to prove  
Those men but weak of heart who love  
Their life so much that when anear  
Death draws, their spirits sink with fear.  
No honeysweet he gained thereby,  
But rashly gave himself to die  
Within a boiling sulphurous wave :  
And Origen his cullions clave  
(Which was to me an insult sore)  
Because he deemed that he could more  
And better holy women serve  
Without suspicion he might swerve  
From virtue's path. But such dread fate  
Some say for these was designate,  
Vowing that destiny is writ  
For each, and all are born to it,  
E'en as the constellations roll  
Above them when they reach the goal  
Of birth, and dire necessity  
Declareth sternly what must be,  
Without the power to turn or stem  
The fate the stars provide for them.

17850  
Violations of  
Nature

17860

17870

## 84 THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

**Influence  
of the  
stars** But I past doubt or question know  
 What natural powers the stars bestow,  
 Making the hearts of men to bend  
 Either towards good or evil end, 17880  
 Obeying the material force  
 Which of their lives doth shape the course.  
 But if men are with wholesome food  
 Of nurture sweet and doctrine good  
 Supplied, and virtuous friends should be  
 Assigned to bear them company,  
 And wholesome medicines be given  
 The influence of the stars to leaven,  
 Then will they wisely do amain  
 And inborn wickedness restrain. 17890  
 For e'en though men and women spurn,  
 By nature, what is good, and turn  
 Towards evil, yet if they but give  
 Their ears to Reason, they shall live  
 Anew, embracing what is good  
 During their days of lustihood,  
 E'en as behoveth them to do.  
 The stars, within whose vast purview  
 Man wakes to life, have influence great,  
 But Reason all doth dominate : 17900  
 Against her force can they do nought  
 For 'neath their power she was not brought  
 At birth, and therefore ne'er can they  
 Reduce her might beneath their sway.

But to resolve the question how  
 Predestination doth allow  
 God's prescience, and how man's free-will  
 May coexist with both and still

Survive and work, is not a thing  
 Suited to lay folk's questioning ;  
 And whosoe'er should undertake  
 'This matter clear and plain to make,  
 Will find that when one point is solved,  
 Another straightway is evolved.  
 For, firstly, no man would insist  
 But what the trine may co-exist,  
 For free-will absent, then no meed  
 Could e'er be claimed for worthy deed,  
 Nor those whose lives in crime are spent  
 Were justly cast for punishment,  
 If once by perfect proof 'twere shown  
 All by necessity is done ;  
 For then this man nought else could do  
 But what is honest, just, and true,  
 And that man who all law defies  
 Could act by no means otherwise ;  
 Whether man would or not must he  
 Do right or wrong by destiny.

Free-will

17910

17920

And true it is, a man might say,  
 'To give his disputation play :  
 'That God can nowise be deceived  
 Of that which he in thought hath weaved,  
 But everything must hap past doubt,  
 Which he erewhile hath known about ;  
 For kens he how all matters tend,  
 And how they work, and where they end :  
 For otherwise, should it be so,  
 That God did not all things foreknow,  
 He were not of unbounded might,  
 With knowledge filled as morn with light,

17930

17940

**Destiny** The sovereign master, lord, and king  
 Of man, and every living thing :  
 Our inmost thoughts he would not then  
 Divine, but simply rank with men,  
 Who in dark ignorance are left,  
 And doubt, of perfect knowledge reft,  
 And to suppose that God could be  
 Thus blind were downright devilry ;  
 Such thoughts all men would scorn to hear,  
 Whose minds are blessed with reason clear. 17960  
 Thus, if a man some special thing  
 Should do, or into action bring  
 His thought or speech against his will,  
 Necessity doth he fulfil,  
 For this thing is predestinate,  
 Fixed and determined as by fate,  
 And thus 'tis clearly seen, I wot,  
 That free-will man hath nowise got.

But if stern destiny no change  
 Permits to aught within life's range, 17960  
 As needs this argument must prove,  
 Which saith necessity doth move  
 All things, and no man ill or well  
 Can do, but acts beneath fate's spell,  
 What thanks would man then owe to God ?  
 Or wherefore fear his vengeful rod ?  
 Though this or that a man might swear,  
 Fate would his purpose overbear—  
 Alike unjust were God if good  
 He cheered or evil ways withstood 17970  
 In such a case—what else could be ?  
 For he who thinks thereon will see



That if nor virtue were nor vice  
 Vain were the altar's sacrifice,  
 And vain were prayer to God, I wot,  
 If good and ill, alike, were not.  
 And if, when God the throne did mount  
 Of justice, took he no account  
 Of vice or virtue, surely then  
 Unjust his ways would be with men, 17980  
 For righteous folk with murderers  
 And vilest thieves and usurers  
 Would be amerced, and hypocrites  
 Would with God's holy saints cry quits,  
 The whole in equal balance weighed.  
 And thus would righteous folk be made  
 Ashamed, who give them heart and soul  
 To God, in hope to reach the goal  
 Of heaven, for if no man could gain  
 His grace, good works were wrought in vain. 17990

God is  
 perfect

But God, who died upon the rood  
 For man, is perfect, just, and good,  
 For otherwise would be defect  
 In him, whom shade of sin ne'er flecked.  
 But unto every man that lives  
 In equal recompense he gives  
 Of praise or blame ; right good reward  
 Find worthy works, and by the board  
 Go destinies—at least so far  
 As they esteemed by laymen are— 18000  
 Who unto them impute whate'er  
 Befalleth, whether foul or fair,  
 But still free-will exists, although  
 She's mauled and cuffed with many a blow.

## 88 THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

**Necessity** But if one's purpose 'twere to end  
**denied** Free-will, and destiny defend  
 (As many a one ere this hath tried),  
 He would aver that things must tide  
 To their fulfilment, once foreseen,  
 'Though they had all uncertain been 18010  
 Until they lastly came to pass.  
 For if one, who foreseeing was,  
 Should say: Such thing must come  
 about,  
 Beyond all questioning or doubt,  
 Is it not clear that thing must be  
 Of absolute necessity?  
 And thus when all is said and done,  
 Necessity is clearly one  
 With certainty, and certitude  
 Necessity doth thus include, 18020  
 For nought is absolutely sure  
 But what must be past hope or cure.  
 How then must we our answer shape,  
 Would we this argument escape?  
 A man's foretelling may be true,  
 Yet none perforce the act need do,  
 For, notwithstanding his foreseeing,  
 The thing foretold may have its being  
 Not by necessity at all,  
 But that it chanceth so to fall; 18030  
 So 'tis but, as you clearly see,  
 A relative necessity,  
 And by no means compulsion simple:  
 The argument's not worth a wimple,  
 That everything that's bound to be  
 Is therefore pure necessity.

Nor is it wisdom to confound  
A prophecy, which proveth sound,  
With that which is quite absolute  
And necessary past dispute,  
Such arguments as these can ne'er  
Prove free-will but a thing of air.

Destiny  
con-  
sidered

18040

For otherwise, if we but think  
One moment, tell me, who would swink  
At any project, or set out  
To finish that he dreamed about,  
In such a case, or counsel take,  
This thing to scheme, and that to make,  
If all within this world were planned  
And fixed by Destiny's stern hand?  
In counsel, craft, and handiwork  
All men alike would labour shirk,  
And nought of praise nor aught of scorn  
Would old things have or those new-born;  
Vain were things done or things to do,  
And vain were words, or false or true.  
No man would need to learn his trade,  
For ready to his hand 'twere made  
As though a painful lifetime he  
Had spent in honest industry.  
But none would e'er agree to this,  
Since evident and clear it is  
That nought in all the world is done  
By pure necessity alone,  
But whether, or for good or ill,  
Man acts by prompting of free-will,  
Nor is there any force outside  
Himself that doth his actions guide,

18050

18060

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G

## 90 THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

God's This thing he does, and that he dompts,  
 fore- E'en as his reason lets or prompts. 18070  
 know-  
 ledge

But endless work it were, I trow,  
 Through all the arguments to plough  
 That have against free-will been brought ;  
 But some in this regard have taught  
 That God's foreknowledge in no wise  
 Fast bound necessity implies  
 For all the ways and works of man  
 On one inalterable plan.  
 'Tis not because God surely knows  
 Beforehand all things men propose, 18080  
 That therefore deeds and thoughts must be  
 Fast bound to sheer necessity ;  
 But since that, unto him is clear  
 The way each man his life will steer,  
 Therefore that way it needs must go.  
 But surely these folks little know  
 How this dark tangle to unknit.  
 For he who doth their meaning wit,  
 And followeth up the strain throughout  
 Must see that then it comes about, 18090  
 If their imagining be true,  
 Because that God all things foreknew  
 That plainly proves Necessity.  
 But he a fool must surely be  
 Who doth so little understand  
 God's power, as think his mighty hand  
 Needs human aid—they who proclaim  
 Such doctrine put their God to shame ;  
 'Tis to belittle his foresight  
 With vain discourse, and mock his might. 18100

But Reason doth reject and spurn  
 The thought that God from men may learn,      God om-  
 For then assuredly were not      niscient  
 His wisdom free from taint or blot.  
 Worthless, therefore, were this reply,  
 Which God's foresight would stultify,  
 And hide his gracious providence  
 'Neath shades of darkest ignorance.  
 For certain 'tis God ne'er can gain  
 Knowledge from man—blind, weak, and vain;  
 Nay, such a doctrine would impute      18111  
 To God less power than absolute,  
 Which were a thought too dread to speak,  
 Lest he thereon should vengeance wreak.

Others have otherwise discussed  
 The matter, saying that we must  
 Thus understand it: They agree  
 That whatsoever things may be  
 Done of free-will, as men elect,  
 And thence disposed to full effect,      18120  
 God knows the way that each doth tend,  
 And with clear vision sees the end,  
 With slight addition thereunto:  
 Namely, the method they pursue,  
 To bring their purposing about.  
 Therefore maintain they that past doubt,  
 Since God knows all, though things may be  
 By no means of necessity,  
 They yet must hap, and he the end  
 Must surely see, nor aught forfend.      18180  
 All things on earth, he well doth know,  
 Must either this or that way go,

**Necessity** This one by positive negation,  
**ques-** Or that indeed by affirmation,  
**tioned** Yet not so certainly but what  
 Some otherwise might fall the lot,  
 For nought can hap for good or ill  
 But by the working of free-will.

And who, but one devoid of sense,  
 Dare limit God's omnipotence, 18140  
 Saying that his all-seeing eye  
 Doth ineffectually try  
 To pierce the future, and can see  
 That which must hap but doubtfully?  
 For then, though he the end should know,  
 He were not sure it might not go  
 In adverse course to that foreseen.  
 And if it turned so, that must mean  
 That his foreknowledging is able  
 To be deceived as thing unstable, 18150  
 As I erewhile have pointed out.  
 But other folk have solved the doubt  
 In different fashion, for some say  
 That: What befalls from day to day,  
 Whether it be of ill or good,  
 Comes only in all likelihood  
 By sheer necessity, since God  
 Rules all that passes on the sod  
 Of earth, or in the azure sky,  
 Great things and small, and low and high. 18160  
 For he doth absolutely know,  
 (Whichever way free-will may go)  
 All things before they come to birth,  
 And whether they in dole or mirth

Shall end, and thus doth he foresee  
 And know all of necessity.  
 And these speak truth, for all allow,  
 And to this plain conclusion bow,  
 That from eternity's far goal  
 God's prescience hath beheld the whole 18170  
 That e'er hath been or e'er shall be,  
 Unclouded by obscurity.  
 He sees how all things needs must go  
 In heaven above and earth below  
 The starlit skies, yet sets he not  
 Upon himself or man I wot  
 Smallest constraint. For knowledge clear  
 Of all that haps, or far or near,  
 And all that possibly may be,  
 Comes to him through the power that he 18180  
 Wioldeth unchecked, and through the light  
 Of goodness and all piercing sight  
 Which nought can mar, or let, or dim.  
 And who should say he bendeth him  
 Before Necessity, would speak  
 As one of wit, dull, vain and weak.  
 For 'tis not God's all prescient lore  
 Makes things to hap, nor any more  
 Is it because they are to be  
 That he their happening doth foresee, 18190  
 But in that he all powerful is,  
 And therefore must of that and this,  
 Both good and ill, know everything  
 Where all must end, whence all doth  
 spring.  
 Nothing is dark to him, but lies  
 Naked and clear before his eyes.

**Necessity**  
**unreason-**  
**able**

Free-will And whosoe'er should undertake  
 proved This matter straight and plain to make  
 To folks unlettered, would do well  
 The cause and argument to tell 18200  
 In simplest phrase, unclogged, and free  
 Of learned gloss and subtlety.

Suppose a man had will to do  
 Some thing, yet failed to carry through  
 His work because he feared to be  
 Surprised therein, and probably  
 Win blame therefor, and so let stand  
 Unfinished that he took in hand ;  
 And then suppose that no one knew  
 Aught of the work that man would do, 18210  
 Or that which he had put away,  
 Unfinished till a future day ;  
 He who should later learn the thing  
 Were done or not, its perfecting  
 Would neither hinder nor advance,  
 And if thereof he'd known perchance  
 A little sooner, he perforce  
 Would hinder not his neighbour's course  
 Of action, whether he had done  
 'The thing that he had once begun, 18220  
 Or stayed his hand, for good or ill,  
 E'en as he exercised his will,  
 For thus hath he free-will amain  
 To do, or from his deed abstain.

But God, whose ways of working are  
 More absolutely perfect far  
 Than man's, knows all things ere they loom,  
 And what shall be their final doom :



How by the master's will may this	
Or that affair be turned, ywis ;	18230
Who may determine to elect	Individual will
This course, and that one to reject,	
To go straight onward, or aside,	
Turn as good sense or folly guide.	
God also knows what things have been	
Ere men had their inception seen,	
And he the reason doth perceive	
Of those who work half finished leave,	
And how, forsooth, their course they sped	
By interest, shame, or reason led.	18240
For certain am I, into crime	
May men be tempted many a time,	
But yet therefrom have power to turn	
If that their hearts towards goodness	
yearn.	
And some men will from evil cease,	
And tread the paths of holy peace	
For love of God—such folk I've known,	
Though, of a truth, they're sparsely sown.	
Another, who to sin hath mind,	
Assured therein no let to find,	18250
Will ne'ertheless his passions curb,	
Lest that remorseful fear disturb	
His soul. All this God's piercing eye	
Sees quicker than the lightnings fly,	
And every motive, force, and spring	
Perceives from their engendering.	
From him no matter e'er were hid,	
Nor kept aback whatso betid.	
For nought can be so far away	
But plain and clear as light of day,	18260

God's 'Tis spread in his all-piercing sight.  
 mirror Though years on years of day and night  
 Had through a hundred thousand flown,  
 Whether in acre, mart, or town,  
 Of good or ill, God seeth all  
 Clearly as that which doth befall  
 'To-day, and he hath always seen  
 Each thing that in the world hath been  
 Enacted, for all things appear  
 Reflected in his mirror clear, 18270  
 Which none but he have power to make  
 More bright, unless free-will they break :  
 That perfect mirror is, in truth,  
 Himself, whence all things spring, forsooth.

Within this burnished surface fair,  
 Kept 'neath his watchful love and care,  
 He sees whatever is to be,  
 Present before him constantly.  
 The fate of those beholds he who  
 To him fair loyal service do, 18280  
 And likewise of those men who right  
 And justice hold in foul despite,  
 And unto each within his thought  
 Awardeth what their works have bought,  
 Salvation sweet—damnation drear.  
 Predestination doth appear  
 Herein, and foresight doth express,  
 Which, knowing all, need nothing guess.  
 And he sweet grace to those doth give  
 Who strive within his laws to live, 18290  
 But yet in nowise doth supplant  
 The free-will he saw good to grant.

By free-will worketh every man ;  
 Whether his life it bless or ban,  
 It lieth clear within his ken.  
 And whosoever among men  
 Should solve eternity's close knot,  
 Were in possession, as I wot,  
 Of life unending—such as ne'er  
 Can cease or be devised to heir.

Power of  
 the stars

18800

But God, by all-wise providence,  
 Doth order through the world dispense,  
 And rule and stablish things to wend  
 By due succession towards their end,  
 Working, by unsuspected cause,  
 To due effect through hidden laws.  
 And so shall be throughout all time,  
 For therewith shall the stars keep chime,  
 Pursuing their eternal course,  
 And by their revolutions' force  
 Shall use their powers, unseen, immense,  
 By necessary influence  
 On one and all alike of those  
 Strange things the elements enclose,  
 As on them fall the starry rays  
 Unceasingly till end of days.  
 For all things that have power to give  
 New life, their likes shall cause to live  
 Again by combination sure,  
 Of nature's work, which aye shall dure  
 According as they find each one  
 In close affinity to run.  
 That doomed to death shall surely die,  
 That born to life, live equally.

18810

18820

### 93 THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

Stars Even as natural longings burn,  
may be So different men their hearts will turn,  
crossed Some unto pleasures void and vain,  
While others are of virtue fain.

But yet perchance man's fate may be  
Not always mapped out perfectly 18330  
According to the stars' intent,  
For sometimes things by accident  
Arrested are, which had obeyed  
Their influence were their course not stayed.  
Or chance, or some erratic will,  
May oftentimes push men to fulfil  
That thing towards which their hearts incline ;  
I therefore destiny define  
As a predestination which  
May, as men's hearts and feelings twitch 18340  
Their wills, be shaped and modified  
To this or that on either side.

Thus, happiness a man may find,  
Whether it chance that Fortune kind  
Hath to him from his birth-hour been,  
With friends and wealth right well beseen,  
Hardy and bold whereso he fare,  
Bright, generous, blithe and debonnair,  
Or the blind maiden on him frown.  
But let him of his fair renown 18350  
Be jealous, lest his life he stain  
With vice, or unto sin give rein,  
Or let his palms and fingers itch  
With avarice, whence no man grows rich.  
Who takes dame Reason for his guide,  
Will with sufficiency abide

THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE 99

Content, and with a generous heart,  
Food, weed, and goods will he depart  
To those who need, yet nought will he  
Fall to vain prodigality.  
Yea, let him avarice despise,  
Whence love of hoarding doth arise  
In men, until they daily live  
In torments great as hell can give,  
For so doth it constrict and bind  
Their souls, that unto honour blind  
They soon become : all virtue spurns  
The wretch whose heart with avarice burns.  
So may a man, who's not a fool,  
Take keep no other vices rule  
His life, or if he fain astray  
Will go, may virtue cast away,  
For free-will hath such potent might  
For him who knows himself aright,  
That he his path may guarantee,  
If true unto himself he be ;  
For casting from his heart all sin,  
He victory o'er the stars may win.

Benefits  
of fore-  
know-  
ledge  
18300

18870

But if that man could have fore-view  
Of what the heavens propose to do,  
He might protect himself therefrom.  
Suppose, for instance, heat should come  
From heaven, so ardent, all must die :  
Could men foresee it, hastily  
They'd build them shaded grottos near  
Cool marshlands formed by rivers clear,  
Or spacious caverns would they mine  
Beneath the rocks, where ne'er could shine

18380

The flood foreseen    The sun.    Or if they should foresee  
 That some great deluge needs must be,    18390  
 Forewarned thereof, they'd quickly seek  
 Safety on high-built mountain peak,  
 Or else in huge tall-sided boat  
 Above the flood's breast bravely float,  
 E'en as in ancient books we're told  
 Deucalion did in days of old  
 With Pyrrha—who from death escaped  
 In the great ark their labour shaped,  
 Or else had they succumbed to fate  
 'Neath the wild waters desolate.    18400  
 And when aland once more they stood,  
 And witnessed how the rolling flood  
 Between the fertile valleys sank,  
 Each lake hemmed in by grass-bound bank,  
 But saw no spark of human life,  
 Forth went Deucalion and his wife  
 To Themis' temple to confess  
 Their thanks, for her farwittingness  
 It was that ordered what should be  
 And shaped the hand of destiny.    18410

## XCVIII

How Themis to Deucalion gave  
 Such counsel, as would surely save  
 The human race, if only he  
 With Pyrrha wrought discernin

**T**HEN prone at Themis' feet the pair  
 Fell on their knees, beseeching her  
 To teach them how they might restore  
 The human lineage as before.

The goddess listed the request  
 'To her thus piously address,  
 Saying: As forthward hence ye go,  
 Be careful, both of you, to throw  
 Your mother's bones behind you. Great  
 Was Pyrrha's anger, and she straight  
 Refused the counsel, crying: Nay!  
 An outrage 'twere to cast away  
 My mother's bones, in such rude sort,  
 Of wind and storm to be the sport;  
 But soon Deucalion made all plain:  
 'The action that you deem profane,  
 Quoth he, behold I in another  
 And better sense, earth is our mother,  
 And we with reason may the stones  
 And rocks thereof account her bones,  
 And those must we behind our  
 backs

18420 Deuca-  
 lion and  
 Pyrrha

Throw to restore the race that lacks.  
 Straightway with one consent they did  
 The action subtle Themis bid,  
 And instantly around them grew  
 Of carles and queans a plenteous crew.  
 From out the stones Deucalion cast  
 Behind him, as he onward passed,  
 Sprang menkind, while a goodly band  
 Of women fell from Pyrrha's hand,  
 And e'en as pebbles were forbears  
 Of all the human race, man wears  
 A nature hard and tough as stone,  
 And surely was their work well done  
 And wisely, who the flood withstood  
 Within their ark, well built of wood.

18430

18440

18450

**Famine** And so might all, had they but known  
**fore-** Beforehand, that dread wrath have flown.  
**fended**

Or should fell Famine come anear,  
 Whose blighting hand the corn makes sere,  
 'Till all the folk be like to die  
 Therethrough, and perish wretchedly ;  
 They might with careful hand retain  
 Within their garners plenteous grain,  
 Saw they the spectre loom before  
 Their eyes for years, two, three or four, 18460  
 For then with well-filled granaries dight  
 They could their gaunt-eyed foeman fight,  
 And all alike, or young or hoar,  
 Keep the fierce wolf from off the door,  
 As Joseph erst in Egypt did,  
 And thus the years of dearth outrid,  
 Making within his garners great,  
 Provision for all Egypt's state,  
 So that none pain of hunger knew.

Or could men but foresee when due 18470  
 Was direful frost, to wrap the wold  
 In dread extremity of cold,  
 Then fore all else their care would be  
 To set their hands industriously  
 To weave and fashion garments warm,  
 Their bodies to protect from harm  
 Of frost, and stacks of wood they'd raise,  
 On glowing hearth to spit and blaze  
 Through yule-tide nights, and freely draw  
 Forth, from the heaped-up grange, white straw,



**THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE 103**

And therewith thickly thatch each house      18481      **Indoor**  
Against the season perilous,      **pleasures**  
And doors and windows tightly close  
Whene'er the boisterous northwind rose,  
And so with stoves would warm the air  
That, though they mother-naked were,  
From cold they'd suffer no mischance,  
But mirthful song would join to dance,  
While they might hear the storm without  
Bluster and rage with deafening rout,      18490  
Destroying beasts in field and wood,  
And binding every stream and flood  
With ice-chains strong as iron. No care  
They'd feel for what in outer air  
Might hap; but make the rafters ring  
With strains of merry carolling,  
And while they trod the tuneful measure,  
'Twould greatly quicken up their pleasure  
If they from time to time should peer  
Through casements on the landscape drear, 18500  
Then hug their comforts and rejoice  
That safe were they; for though the voice  
Of winter raged for nights and days,  
Still jolly sports and roundelays  
Would glad all hearts.

But if men nought  
By God through miracle were taught  
Or oracle, then, mark you well,  
Unless one knoweth how to tell  
The stars, and what their functions be,  
By science of astronomy,  
And how it is their piercing rays  
Rain influence upon mundane ways,

**Despise** He ne'er with sure effect can learn  
**destiny** How matters yet unborn may turn.

And if man's body be so strong  
 That it may overcome the wrong  
 Of astral influence, and work  
 Against the fates that therein lurk,  
 More powerful still the soul must be  
 To battle 'gainst fatality, 18520  
 Since 'tis the soul alone that gives  
 The body force by which it lives.  
 It follows, therefore, that Free-will  
 More easily and lightly still,  
 By usage of a ready wit  
 Successfully may shelter it  
 From grief or trouble, since it may  
 Of this or that prefer the way.  
 'Twere well by heart this clause to know,  
 That from one's self one's troubles grow, 18530  
 And by no means a man can claim  
 Of right to cast elsewhere the blame.  
 Let him then destiny despise;  
 If his nativity he tries,  
 And feels affiance of his state,  
 Why fear what men prognosticate?  
 He lives above all destiny,  
 Whatever it may threat to be.

Full many a case might I untruss,  
 And destiny at full discuss, 18540  
 Explaining each thing, bit by bit,  
 And showing pro and con for it,

Consult a  
cleric

And many a fair example spread  
 To view, ere I my cause had said.  
 But far too long 'twould be should I  
 Explain the question utterly.  
 Let him who deems my matter dark,  
 Consult some grave and learned clerk  
 Thereon. 'Tis true I might have kept  
 From further speech hereon, except 18550  
 That I must somewhat more explain,  
 Lest that my foe should cry amain,  
 Hearing me thus his crimes lament,  
 That I his case misrepresent,  
 And that from his creator he  
 Blame and disgrace wins wrongfully.  
 Full often have I heard one say  
 That nowise Will can have free play,  
 Since God by his foreknowledge so  
 Doth curb Free-will in man, that lo! 18560  
 Fatality rules all, and nought  
 Is human work or human thought,  
 'To that degree, that if, forsooth,  
 Some good man doth, 'tis God, in  
 truth,  
 Directs it, or if one do ill,  
 By God's right hand 'tis ordered still,  
 Who by the finger so doth lead  
 A man, and all his actions speed,  
 That whether of theft or alms they be,  
 Or prayer divine, or ribaldry, 18570  
 Or kindly words, or slanderous speech,  
 Or plunder rude, or murderous breach  
 Of peace, or marriage duly dight,  
 Whether arranged of wrong or right,

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H

Unto-  
ward  
spousals    The plan, saith he, by God is laid,  
This woman for that man is made,  
And nought can shake or alter it,  
Nor force of arms, nor wealth, nor wit,  
So falleth all by destiny.

And if a spousal mismade be, 18580  
And man and woman wild with rage,  
In wordy contest should engage,  
Cursing all those who gave consent  
To celebrate the sacrament,  
Then the insensate madman cries :  
'To God it is we owe these ties,  
Through him alone hath come about  
This wretched matrimonial rout.'  
And then doth he with oath aver  
It could no otherwise occur. 18590

No! No! This false is, as I live,  
Such sauce to folk God doth not give  
As cause them to agree unto  
A lie, our God is just and true.  
It is of men's foul passions rise  
Unholy thoughts and love of lies,  
Which urge them on to deeds they ne'er  
Need do unless they willing were,  
For those who know themselves may spurn  
Ill ways, and towards fair virtue turn. 18600  
Let them unto their God address  
Their prayers, and he their hearts will bless,  
For those most wisely love, I trow,  
Who their own hearts most throughly know.

The creatures that we reckon mute,  
And of all reason destitute,

By nature left in ignorance,	
Were they endowed with reasoning sense,	<b>If beasts</b>
Would put mankind in evil case.	<b>but knew</b>
Think you the wild horse, swift of pace,	18610
Would then let man his back bestride,	
Or bit, and rein, and curb abide?	
Ne'er then had oxen, armed with horn,	
The plough-yoke or the wain-shaft borne,	
Nor mule, nor ass, nor camel proud	
His back beneath a burden bowed.	
The elephant of cumbrous form,	
Whose nose can raise a trumpet storm,	
Yet hath therewith the skill to feed	
Himself, as man with hands, at need,	18620
E'en as the cat and dog likewise,	
Would, as a master, man despise.	
The lion, tiger, boar and bear	
Man's lineage would betwixt them share,	
And on him, when abed at night,	
The rats would feast with rare delight.	
No bird would flutter to his lure,	
But perch on high 'mid boughs secure,	
And now and then would downward	
sweep	
To peck his eyes out while asleep.	18630
And if hereto he made reply	
That all must at his mercy lie,	
Since he strong armour would prepare,	
And sword and helm and buckler wear,	
And dight stout bows and arbalests—	
Why so, forsooth, would do the beasts.	
Would not great apes and suchlike brutes	
Fashion and forge them perfect suits,	

**Men's** With doublets, leather, brass, and steel,  
**tor-** And shafts which deadly strokes would  
**mentors** deal?

18040

For great apes thrive in distant lands,  
Furnished, as well as men, with hands,  
And therewith well might learn to write.  
And should they join, in man's despite,  
To work him injury and harm,  
Not vainly 'twould his fears alarm,  
For many a thousand might they make  
Of engines which his power would break.

Even the earwig and the flea

To man might most vexatious be,  
If they in furtivewise should creep  
Within his ear while locked in sleep.

18450

Nay, verily, the bug and louse  
A mortal of his rest may chouse,  
And so his skin may fret and grieve  
That he perforce his work must leave,  
And wriggle, fidget, dance and skip,  
Until at last he's fain to strip

His clothes from off him, and about  
Will twist him well-nigh inside out.

18640

E'en paltry flies, when men at meat  
Are sitting, spoil the food they eat,  
And boldly will attack an earl

Or king in face, as page or churl.

The very ants and vermin small  
Might keep strong men beneath a thrall

Of torment, if their power they knew,  
Their lucky ignorance is due

To nature. But a being dowed

**With reason, whether of the crowd**

18470

## THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE 109

Of mortal men, or angels high,  
 (Who both should praise God equally)  
 If he forgets him, like a fool,  
 'Tis that he lies 'neath sin's dark rule,  
 Which doth his clear perception drown,  
 Or he fair Reason's sway would own,  
 And let Free-will his actions guide ;  
 Who doth not so, casts God aside.  
 And if within this chapter I  
 Have treated Free-will lengthily,  
 'Tis that I wished to clear away  
 Error, and make all clear as day.

**The  
elements**

18680

But with intent to carry out  
 The end that first I set about,  
 Namely to heal the grief and dole  
 Which pierce with wounds my heart and soul,  
 This matter I'll discuss no more,  
 But to the heavens, whereof before  
 I spake, will now return ; they do  
 Their devoir ever towards all who  
 Are subject to their influence,  
 E'en as they prove dark, light, or dense.

18690

Contrarious, boisterous winds they raise,  
 And set at times the air ablaze,  
 Clearing the heavy atmosphere  
 With lightning, then anon men hear,  
 Quick following on the vivid flash,  
 Its drum-beat with a deafening crash,  
 And thence are powerful vapours born,  
 Whereby the clouds are rent and torn,

18700

## 110 THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

**Nature's** Making their very bellies burst  
**war** With thunderbolts, like furies curst,  
 And breaking up the earth's hard crust,  
 With wild tornado-storms, to dust,  
 And casting strongest towers adown,  
 And mighty trees with roots fast grown  
 Into the entrails of the earth,  
 Whence, years long gone, they took their birth,  
 Their branches broken, torn, and rent  
 By blasts from heaven's high firmament. 18710

Some say that all this fearfulmoil  
 Is fruit of spiteful demons' toil,  
 With grapples, talons, cords and picks,  
 But such tales are not worth two sticks,  
 Being but vain imagining ;  
 For 'tis but wind and tempest bring  
 This hideous havoc. Now will I  
 Describe the ruin wrought thereby  
 To everything on earth in turn ;  
 Pierce winds lay corn, and vineyards burn, 18720  
 And fruits and flowers alike illtreat,  
 With withering cold or scorching heat,  
 Bruising and beating them ere yet  
 They're on the branches duly set  
 And ripened. Then, forsooth, the air  
 Weepeth, as it in sorrow were,  
 And so great pity have the clouds  
 That they divest them of their shrouds  
 All naked, valuing not a straw  
 Their mantles, black as rook or daw, 18780  
 For such extreme of grief they feel  
 That they themselves will rend piecemeal,



## THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE    III

**Rains and  
floods**

Or sometimes turn them inside out,  
 And falling as a waterspout,  
 With such profound distress they weep,  
 'That o'er their banks the rivers sweep,  
 And through the fertile champaign rush,  
 Uprooting hedgerow, tree, and bush,  
 And, ravaging dense forests hoar,  
 In foaming cataracts roll and roar,        18740  
 And flood broad acres sown with wheat,  
 Till costly grows the bread men eat,  
 And many a yeoman's brow is crossed  
 And furrowed for his labour lost.  
 And when the whelming floods are out,  
 The fish at pleasure scud about  
 Through vineyard, orchard, croft, and  
       mead,  
 And there as lords and masters feed,  
 Claiming of right o'er all to roam  
 Unlet, for native house and home        18750  
 To them the waters are ; 'mid ash,  
 Oak, elm, and beech trees, sport and flash  
 Their coats of mail, expelling thence  
 The savage beasts, whose heritance  
 They seize : but when o'er pastures swim  
 The fish, look on with aspect grim  
 Bacchus and Pan and Cybele  
 And Ceres, grieved and mazed to see  
 The scale-clad, fin-winged tribes in bands  
 And shoals usurp the fruitful lands,        18760  
 And merry satyrs, fauns, and fays  
 Lament the memory of fair days  
 Gone by, when they 'mid fragrant flowers  
 Danced, or reposed in shady bowers.

## 112 THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

**Fair days** The nymphs their fountains in the woods,  
**return** Weeping behold o'erwhelmed with floods,  
 Dryads and wood sprites, dwarfs and gnomes,  
 Shrieking, see now their ancient homes  
 Ruled by the waters, and complain  
 Unto the god, whose wide domain 18770  
 Extendeth o'er all floods, that he  
 Should thus entreat them cruelly,  
 Though innocently have they spent  
 Their lives, devoid of ill intent.  
 And through the streets of many a town,  
 'Neath heights which lordly castles crown,  
 The fish hold undisputed sway ;  
 Through cellar, barn, and hall they stray  
 Unhindered, nor do they forbear  
 The fanes of deities, but there 18780  
 Freely disport themselves, and chase  
 The gods from forth each holy place  
 And dim-lit chamber, where on high  
 They stand, and look on wrathfully.

But when from meadow, hill, and plain  
 Fair weather driveth foul amain,  
 The heavens (as weary of the storm  
 And rain that ruined earth's bright form)  
 Assuage the rudeness of the air,  
 Which once again sweet smiles doth wear ; 18790  
 And when the clouds perceive that they  
 Are fed with lightsome air, then gay  
 And joyous are their spirits, and  
 Forthwith they deck themselves in grand  
 And glorious robes of tints diverse,  
 More fair than poets can rehearse,

Or limners paint, and set to dry  
 Their fleeces in the sun's soft eye,  
 And for their carding call the air  
 To help them, when 'tis bright and fair, 18800  
 Then spin the wool, and when 'tis spun,  
 From off their distaff make it run,  
 Which threads for mighty bodkins weaves,  
 As fain were they to lace their sleeves.  
 And should it please them to engage  
 In distant, far-off pilgrimage,  
 Swift coursers they to chariots dight,  
 Wherein they mount, and vale and height  
 Rush o'er like men whom madness  
 blinds.

The  
 clouds

For Eolus, the god of winds 18810  
 (Such name unto this god belongs),  
 When he hath fixed their harness thongs,  
 (For he alone, as charioteer,  
 Knoweth their headlong course to steer),  
 With suchlike wings endues their feet  
 As far outstrip the swallows fleet.  
 Then dons the air his mantle blue  
 As woneth he in Ind to do,  
 And blazons it from west to east  
 As one bedecked for lordly feast ; 18820  
 Then waits serenely till the pack  
 Of snow-fleeced clouds return aback,  
 Who, willing to beguile sad earth,  
 In huntsman's harness issue forth,  
 Within their hands borne many a bow,  
 The which as rainbows mortals know,  
 Though only he who's learned the rule  
 Of optics, in some famous school,

Of rain- Can to his fellow-men explain  
 bows How 'tis that from the sun they gain 18880  
 Their glorious hues, and how 'tis they  
 Are born, and why they pass away,  
 And to what purpose they are sent  
 To blazon the wide firmament,  
 And why such wondrous form they take.  
 Whoso would all this learn should make  
 Him Aristotle's pupil, who  
 Better the ways of nature knew  
 Than any man since Tubal Cain,  
 Or Al-Hakim (Mahound profane), 18840  
 Who wrote on optics such a book  
 As men most learned yet may look  
 Upon with profit.

And each man,  
 Who of the wondrous bows that span  
 The heavens would fain the secrets  
 learn,  
 In nowise can afford to spurn  
 The study of geometry,  
 But an adept therein must be,  
 And of this book of optics should  
 Obtain a thorough masterhood ; 18850  
 Therein too may he learn the cause  
 Why mirrors, through some subtle laws,  
 Have power, to objects seen therein  
 (Atoms minute or letters thin),  
 To give appearance of fair size,  
 Though naked, unassisted eyes  
 Can scarce perceive them ; grains of sand  
 Seem stones, when through these glasses  
 scanned ;

# THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE 115

These may we count, and those may read, Mars and  
 From such a distance, that, indeed, 18860 Venus  
 If one should tell the things he'd seen,  
 Small credit would he win, I ween,  
 From him who'd seen it not, nor knew  
 How 'twas that such great marvels grew.  
 But to these matters, blind affiance  
 No man need give, they're proved by science.

If Mars and Venus, who were trapped  
 In bed together, had but happed,  
 Ere they began their amorous dance,  
 In mirrors of such sort to glance, 18870  
 They'd ne'er been ta'en within the net,  
 So subtly wrought and delicate,  
 Which Vulcan's jealousy prepared  
 To spoil the sport they fain had shared,  
 But had perceived, as I opine,  
 His carefully-contrived design ;  
 For though the net had been a braid  
 Finer than webs by spiders made,  
 Yet by these mirrors had they seen  
 Its threads, and so had Vulcan been 18880  
 Deceived, for they had entered not  
 Therein, since every thread, I wot,  
 Had then shown forth so coarse and thick  
 That they must have perceived the trick  
 Of Vulcan's snare for them, and he  
 Had proved not their adultery,  
 Nor aught thereof the gods had known  
 Had they but had the luck to own  
 Such mirrors, for beholding spread  
 The net, they had foregone that bed, 18890

**Value of mirrors** And sought some place secure where they  
 Their amorous game might hope to play  
 In perfect safety, void of fear  
 That prying eyes might come anear.  
 Say plainly by the faith you owe  
 To me if I have failed to show  
 Herein the very ground of truth?

*Genius.*

The priest said : You speak well, forsooth,  
 Such mirrors must have, without fail,  
 Been to that twain of great avail, 18900  
 For otherwhere they then had found,  
 Seeing their danger, safer ground,  
 Or with the sword Mars knows so well  
 To wield, he quickly would that fell  
 And envious net in shards have rent,  
 And on the bed have made content  
 Dame Venus, or on other ground  
 An all-sufficient couch had found,  
 Where they in surety might repose  
 Unspied or mocked by jealous foes. 18910  
 Or if Fate looked on them askance  
 So far that by unlucky chance  
 Vulcan espied them while they wrought  
 The work wherein they solace sought,  
 Venus, whose wit is most acute  
 (Right well intrigue doth woman suit),  
 Soon as she heard the door-hinge creak,  
 Her nakedness had clothed, and meek  
 And innocent as lambkin seemed,  
 For Venus ne'er, 'twere safely deemed, 18920

## THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE 117

<p>Had lacked some plausible excuse,          Whereof she might forthwith make use,          Until within her house again          She and her lover made them fain,          Causing her husband to believe          That surely did his wrath deceive          His senses, and therefore agree          To cast aside his jealousy.          Nay, though his very eyes had seen          Her crime, she would declare he'd been          Misled by them, and that his sight          Was no more use by day than night,          For in five minutes woman's tongue          May to a dozen tunes be rung,          And thousands of evasive pleas          She mingles with her sophistries,          (For than a woman none can lie          More sweetly or more hardily),          And speaking so had Mars gone quit.</p>	<p><b>Woman's guile</b></p> <p>18930</p> <p>✕</p>
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### *Nature.*

<p>Right good, sir priest, I find your wit,          Courteous and worthy and discreet.          The hearts of women are replete          With every crafty turn and wile,          (He's but a fool who doubts their guile,)          To champion them is not my cue.          With more effrontery they eschew          The truth than any man, and swear          Black's white if 'tis their fate to bear          Suspicion of some gross misdeed.          Right keen of wit and quick of rede</p>	<p>18940</p> <p>✕</p> <p>18950</p>
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Of optic That man must be who finds them out ;  
 glasses Whence I conclude that, past all doubt,  
 Whoso should woman's heart laid bare  
 Behold, would yet unwisely dare  
 To say he knew her well, for she  
 Would cheat him most assuredly.

*The Author.*

Nature and Genius seem to me  
 Herein to be in sympathy,  
 And Solomon, long years ago,  
 Willing the same sad truth to show, 18960  
 Declared that man were blest who should  
 Find but one woman throughly good.

*Nature.*

Those mirrors also have, quoth she,  
 Full many another property,  
 For things of size, which stand anear,  
 Through them far-off and small appear.  
 Even the highest Alp between  
 France and Sardinia would be seen  
 A mite by one who spied it through  
 These mirrors, so they cause the view 18970  
 To shrink, and dwindle, and contract  
 By the strange mode they light refract.

Through other mirrors may the eyes  
 Behold things in due form and size,  
 If those who look therein know how  
 To use and handle them, I trow.



Won-  
drous  
sights

And others, if so be you turn  
 Their faces on to objects, burn  
 And scorch their substance, if the rays  
 Are focussed from divergent ways 18080  
 To one small point when clear on high  
 The sun shines forth resplendently.  
 And others will reflections cause  
 To show themselves, by varied laws,  
 Oblong and straight, and upside down,  
 According as the lights are thrown.  
 And he who handleth well the glass  
 Can make one form for many pass ;  
 While in one head can show four eyes  
 He who with skill the mirror plies. 18090  
 Most curious phantoms may be seen  
 By those who look within, I woen,  
 And outside living forms appear,  
 Whether in air or water clear, l  
 So that between the eyes and glass  
 A thousand spectres seem to pass  
 By lines and angles deftly cut  
 In squares and little flats, so put  
 That in the facets figures dance  
 As sun-rays through them gleam and glance, 19000  
 Some seen reversed, and some upright,  
 According to the varying light,  
 All multiplied in such strange wise  
 As to confuse, and maze men's eyes,  
 For all the rays they thus receive,  
 Cross, and deceptive visions weave.

All this hath Aristotle shown,  
 To whom such matters well were known

**Magni-** (For every science loved he well);  
**fyng** He saith: 'A man in sickness fell, 19010  
**glasses** And his affliction proved to be  
 That nought could he distinctly see,  
 But dim and dark seemed all the air,  
 And whitherso he chanced to fare  
 Or here or there, from place to place  
 In front of him he saw his face.'

In mirrors, if nought comes between,  
 A thousand wonders may be seen,  
 But lack of them will oft-times make  
 Men fall in many a strange mistake 19020  
 (Of distance, for afar men see  
 Two things that seem conjoined to be,  
 Or one thing seemeth to be two  
 By some diversity of view,  
 Or three seem six, or four seem eight,  
 And he who cares to cogitate  
 Thereon, shall, as his eyes are set,  
 Fewer or more in focus get;  
 Or numerous things seem one to be,  
 Through glasses ordered skilfully. 19030  
 A mannikin, whom men would call  
 A dwarf, these mirrors make as tall  
 As ten great giants, (though he could  
 Pass 'neath low branches through a wood,)  
 So that folk seeing him would tremble;  
 And in like way make dwarfs resemble  
 Giants, for by their eyes are they  
 Through these strange mirrors led astray.

And many a time when men have been  
 Deceived through shadows they have seen 19040

# THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE 121

Visions  
and  
dreams

By suchlike mirrors brought about,  
Seeming to leave no room for doubt,  
They straightway to their neighbours vaunt  
That they have been where devils haunt,  
Ne'er dreaming there could be deceit  
In mirrors thus their eyes to cheat.  
An eye diseased and out of gear  
Maketh one object twain appear,  
'Two candles then appear for one,  
And o'er the heaven would seem to run 10040  
'Two moons. The man existeth not  
Who sees so clearly, as I wot,  
That ne'er his eyesight may deceive  
His wit, and cause him to believe  
Amiss, and thus it often haps  
That wrongful judgment rightful caps.

But yet 'tis nowise my affair  
Of all these mirrors to declare  
The form and manner, nor the ways  
In which they cast their varied rays, 10060  
Nor need I of their angles write  
(Thereof full many a book is dight),  
Nor wherefore 'tis the things we see  
Shown in their faces needs must be  
Again reflect within our eyes,  
Nor why deception in them lies.  
Nor further will pretend to say  
Dear priest, how come, or in what way,  
'These sprites, in mirrors or elsewhere,  
And I moreover will forbear 10070  
To tell how other visions thus  
Evolved, or fair or dolorous,

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I

**Dreams** All unexpectedly arise :  
**and** Whether such be deceptive lies  
**mirrors** Or real and substantial truth,  
 I venture not to say forsooth ;  
 I have no lust therewith to deal,  
 Far better 'tis for woe or weal  
 'To let such matters bide— as I  
 Have said crewhile—I pass them by 19080  
 Untouched on : far too deep and wide  
 The subject is on either side,  
 To tell of or much more pretend  
 In perfect wise to comprehend.  
 And if one should to lay folk teach  
 This science, vainly would he preach,  
 For when his tale were fully done,  
 Of all his auditory, none  
 The mirrors' virtues would believe,  
 But deem that he would fain deceive 19090  
 Their eyes and understandings, though  
 His hands the instruments should show  
 With will to demonstrate perchance  
 Their virtues and significance.  
 Most surely would the vulgar ne'er  
 Agree such wondrous visions were  
 Of simple truth, though they might be  
 Cleared and explained most carefully.  
 Nor know we what those fictions are  
 That come upon us from afar 19100  
 In visions, sleeping or awake,  
 And oft men's minds with 'mazzement  
 shake.  
 Therefore I wholly pass them by  
 For fear they weary woefully --

## THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE 123

Both me to speak, and you to hear—  
Of prolix talk I'd fain keep clear.

**Sleep-  
walking**

Women are liable to become  
In speech oft times most troublesome ;  
And in good truth all this I see  
Before my eyes so vividly, 19110  
That since I am of speaking fain,  
I pray you list me once again.

A dream will sometimes so deceive  
Sleepers, that they their couches leave,  
And, donning shoes and other gear,  
Their course from forth their dwellings steer ;  
Then seemeth reason lulled to sleep,  
And fantasy alone to keep  
Dominion o'er them : staff and scrip  
They take, or else, perchance, in grip 19120  
Seize pickaxe, sickle, bow, or bill,  
And wander forth o'er plain and hill,  
Uncertain whither, or their course  
Follow perchance astride a horse,  
By valleys deep, or mountains high,  
Or marshlands, or roads hard and dry,  
Until they gain some far off-land,  
Then wake they, and a-wondering stand,  
Till, mixing among other men,  
Return they to their wits again, 19130  
Swearing their escapade a revel  
Or machination of the devil,  
Who fetched them forth from out their beds,  
Though 'twas in truth their dream-struck heads.

Halluci-  
nations  
of fever

Or when a frenzy haps to seize  
Some man laid low by dire disease,  
And friends but careless vigil keep  
Anear him, deeming him asleep,  
And so it chance that he arise  
From bed, eluding watchful eyes, 19140  
And wander forth in solitude  
Until he reach some forest rude,  
Bosquet or vineyard, wood or mead,  
Without a friend to guide or lead,  
And fall half fannished to the ground.  
There by his friends perchance he's found,  
When thither run they, all too late  
(Seeing they left him to his fate,  
Or hirelings to his care oft-told),  
Dying of hunger, pinched with cold. 19150  
And many men are seen, who though  
They sound of limb and body go,  
Are ne'ertheless with frenzy stricken,  
Till wretched fancies rise and quicken  
Within their brains, and melancholy  
And self-bred fears possess them wholly.  
Within themselves they conjure up  
Dread images to fill their cup  
Of misery, and before their eyes  
Foolish imaginations rise, 19160  
Whereof forsooth we spake before  
Discoursing of the mirrors' lore :  
But these folk take for real and true  
'Their visions which alone are due  
To brains confused.

One will with great  
Devotion muse and meditate,

# THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE 125

Until before his mind is brought	Things
The objects that his soul hath sought,	seen in
And with his eyes he thinks to see	dreams
Things of substantiality,	10170
Though all is false, and doth but seem,	
In fashion as a man may dream	
That sees he clearly with his eyes	
Objects, which are but shadowy lies,	
(Even as Scipio dreamed how heaven	
And hell unto his view were given,	
And sky and earth, and air and sea,	
And all things that therein may be);	
He sees the twinkling stars appear,	
And noteth how birds wing the air,	10180
And fishes swim in pathless seas,	
And beasts disport 'neath leafy trees,	
And noteth men build towers and halls,	
And marketh what to them befalls;	
While this man loveth chamber play,	
Another to the chase all day	
Betakes him on the mountain wide,	
Or to the woods or river-side:	
One dreams of judgments, suits, and	
pleas,	
Another of wars and skirmishes	10190
And tournaments, while song and dance	
A third man dreams of, and perchance	
Another solaceth his soul	
With fiddle-bow or sweet citole,	
Eats well and snuffs the savourous air	
Which doth sweet scent of spices bear,	
And lastly full contentment grasps	
When in his arms his love he clasps;	

The Then sees perhaps anigh him stand  
 fancy's Foul Jealousy, with club in hand, 19200  
 midwife Who hath through Evil-Tongue found out  
 What 'tis the twain are set about,  
 Since deeds he by the forelock takes,  
 And lovers fond unhappy makes.  
 For lovers who devoted are,  
 To ardent passions set no bar,  
 And thence oftwhiles great dolour find  
 When Morpheus' hands their senses bind  
 In slumber, for within their cup  
 Of joy is bitterness stirred up. 19210  
 A prey to sufferings intense  
 (This know I by experience),  
 They deeply dream of her whose love  
 Their hearts are set upon above  
 All others in the world, while those  
 Whom for her sake they hate as foes  
 Are mingled in their dreams, and keep  
 The brain in torment while they sleep.  
 Or if some angry quarrel vex  
 Their souls all night with woes complex, 19220  
 Alone of vengeance, wrath, and hate  
 Men dream, and how to fix the fate,  
 With all the might that in them lies,  
 Of those they count their enemies,  
 Working manœuvres in their brain  
 To reach the ends whereof they're  
 fain.  
 Or if in gaol they pass their time  
 For treason, or some kindred crime,  
 They dream deliverance to achieve,  
 Unless despair her web doth weave, 19230



Dame  
Habundia

Then dream they of the gallows-tree  
(Whereon by day most wretchedly  
They muse), or other grievous thing  
Doth o'er their souls dark shadows sling;  
For all these visions vain, forsooth,  
The semblance bear of earnest truth,  
And thus are joy and grief amain,  
Immixed and meddled in the brain,  
Which every sense in turn deceives  
By shadows which its fancy weaves ; 19240

Whence many foolishly declare  
That men by night mere phantoms are  
Who forth with Dame Habundia speed,  
For, of all children born, indeed,  
Some say that at the least one third  
Are of her nature wild and weird,  
And wander forth three times the week,  
Feeling stern fate within them speak,  
Through all the dwellings round about,  
And bolts and barriers scorn and flout, 19250  
Since they of entries find no lack  
Through cat-hole, rift, or window crack,  
Seen that, their bodies left behind,  
Their spirits roam with pixies kind  
Through places where men haunt and live,  
And if asked why, for reason give :  
That all the wondrous things they see,  
To them in bed ne'er brought could be,  
And therefore through the world afar  
Go forth their souls which nought can bar. 19260  
Nor do they stay them there, forsooth,  
But fain would preach as gospel truth,

**Body** That should the body be turned o'er,  
**and soul** The soul can enter it no more.  
 But monstrous folly count I this,  
 For unto men well known it is  
 That each man's body lieth dead  
 When once therefrom the soul is sped.  
 And none can doubt that if 'twere so,  
 That three times weekly souls must go 19270  
 Forth from the body, and amain  
 Three times re-enter it again  
 Within a week—thus would there be  
 Each week, of resurrections three.

But this point need no man discuss  
 For clear it is to all of us,  
 That never mortal yet drew breath  
 Who twice hath passed the gate of death,  
 Nor spirit e'er put on its clay 19280  
 Again before the judgment-day,  
 Unless some miracle should be  
 By God's hand worked out specially,  
 As of Saint Lazarus we read,  
 Which His unchallenged power bade speed.  
 And, on the other hand, when say  
 Some men, that if the soul away  
 Goes from the mortal frame, and then  
 The corse is turned, it ne'er again  
 Can enter, who can that receive 19290  
 For truth, and such false tale believe?  
 'Tis certain, and beyond all doubt,  
 That when the soul hath passed from out  
 The body, 'tis more quick and free  
 Than while it lives constrictedly

Therein, for its complexion gives  
 Temper to that which in it lives,  
 And therefore 'twould, as I'm inclined  
 'To think, more lightly entrance find  
 'Than exit from the body, though  
 'Twere turned since thence the soul did go. 19300

The soul  
 as an  
 entity

But if of all the human race  
 A third part strays from place to place  
 With Dame Habundia (as we might  
 Believe if old wives' tales tell right),  
 'Then surely must that fate befall  
 Not to a third part, but to all  
 In turn, for none, by likelihood,  
 Exist, who dream not ill or good;  
 And that not thrice a week I ween,  
 But fifteen times in nights fifteen,  
 Or may be more, or may be less,  
 As fancies sleepers' brains oppress.  
 'Tis not my business to decide  
 If truth or falsehood dreams provide,  
 Or whether they esteemed should be,  
 Or scoffed at for absurdity,  
 Or why some hideous aspects wear,  
 While others teem with promise fair,  
 E'en as they severally appear  
 To augur hope or threaten fear, 19810  
 Or prove of different sorts and kinds  
 'Through differing moods of varying minds,  
 Or if in visions God doth send  
 Us revelations, or the fiend  
 Thereby doth in men's hearts inspire  
 Such thoughts as lead them to hell fire ; 19820

130 THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

**Rain-** All this I leave aside perforce,  
**bows and** And take the thread of my discourse.  
**comets**

Alrcady have I told you how  
 The clouds, when they aweary grow 19330  
 Of casting arrows through the sky,  
 (Which are more often moist than dry,  
 Since with soft showers and dew are they  
 Refreshed and watered day by day  
 Unless upon them fiercely beat  
 The thirsty rays of ardent heat),  
 Then slack they all their bows as one  
 When deem they well that so 'twere done.  
 But wondrous, truly, is the law  
 That rules the bows these archers draw, 19340  
 For quickly all their colours fly  
 When they their quivers would supply,  
 And ne'er they use again I ween  
 Their bows when once have they been seen,  
 For if to speed new shafts they're fain,  
 Fashion must they their bows again,  
 Which only can the sun indue  
 And tire with many a glorious hue.

Moreover 'tis with power intense  
 The heavens work out their influence 19350  
 Alike o'er earth, and air, and sea.  
 Great comets cause they, which are free  
 To speed their flames across the sky  
 Unhindered, till they waste and die,  
 And of their portents many a tale  
 Men tell, but all of small avail.

'The deaths of princes they declare,  
 Cry some, who rash predictions dare,  
 But comets in good truth no more  
 Watch over death of kings than o'er  
 The passing of poor peasants, nay,  
 Of neither heed nor care have they.  
 But this most certainly we know,  
 That all around the world they go  
 As they the ordering may find  
 Of climates, beasts, and human kind,  
 Which 'neath the influence and power  
 Are of such stars as rule the hour,  
 Or planets which bestud the heaven  
 And all earth's doings guide and leaven,  
 Controlling things men count as chance  
 With hidden, deep significance,  
 And thus the world's affairs arrange,  
 Subjecting all to many a change.

**Signifi-  
 cance of  
 comets**

19860

19870

I say not that a king should be  
 Esteemed a rich man more than he  
 Who goeth barefoot by the way,  
 Earning his bread from day to day ;  
 For 'tis content that makes richesse,  
 And avarice brings but wretchedness.  
 And whether king, or bare of store,  
 But poor is he who craveth more ;  
 And written in a certain book,  
 We find that kings and pictures look  
 Alike, for Ptolemy made note  
 Of this when Almagest he wrote,  
 Saying: Who would a picture see  
 Right well, should at some distance be,

19880

Fortune For all the faults we see anear,  
 rules all Which at a distance disappear, 19890  
 And things which from afar we deem  
 Most fair, but rudely handled seem  
 When closely viewed.

So, powerful friends  
 Oft willing seem to serve one's ends,  
 When little known, but who should try  
 Them hand to hand, will speedily  
 Discovery make how vain it were  
 Favours to ask, and lest he fare  
 But evilwise, will hesitate  
 Rashly to tempt an evil fate. 19400  
 All this is but what Horace saith  
 Concerning great men's truth and faith.

No! No! the heavenly powers deign not  
 More to note deaths of kings I wot,  
 Than those of honest churls, nor are  
 Kings' bodies dead, one dab of tar  
 More worth than those of clerk and squire,  
 Or honest men who work for hire;  
 Each cries alike on gossip's knee  
 Newborn—what difference can we see? 19410  
 Naked and impotent are all,  
 High-born or peasant, great and small:  
 That human nature is throughout  
 The whole world equal, none can doubt.  
 'Tis fickle Fortune doth confer  
 Her gifts whereso it pleaseth her,  
 And as she gives, so takes away,  
 Uncertain she, from day to day,  
 Freely she gives, and doth reclaim  
 As freely, recking nought men's blame. 19420

XCIX

Here Nature brings before our eyes  
The source whence only can arise  
Nobility, and so displays  
Its modes and manners, works and ways.

AND if some man, with pride elate,  
Should vow that I herein misstate  
The case, declaring that he can  
Lay claim to name of gentleman,  
As people phrase it, seen that he  
Long lineage boasts and blazonry, 19480  
Above rude folk who are but born  
To till the earth, with labour worn,  
I should reply that, 'tis alone  
By virtue noblemen are known,  
And only he should men count base  
In whom fair virtue giveth place  
To hideous vice. An upright heart  
Doth true nobility impart, \*  
But mere nobility of birth  
I reckon as of little worth. 19480  
The nobleman who lives to-day,  
Before his fellows should display  
Those qualities which his forbears  
Won bright renown in far off years.  
Now from the world's vain show they're gone,  
Leaving unto their heirs, alone  
Their wealth, but with them bearing hence  
Their nobleness and excellence  
Of soul, and so their sons remain  
Inheritors of nought but vain 19450

Who is a  
gentle-  
man?

**Clerks** Titles and wealth—unless they buy  
**should be** With noble deeds nobility.  
**noble**

Much fairer chance the learned have  
 To prove them noble, wise, and suave  
 (The wherefore will I straightway show),  
 Than mighty kings and lords, who know  
 No whit of books, for every clerk  
 Who studieth scriptures needs must mark  
 The wit and wisdom taught therein,  
 And deeply pondering them may win 19460  
 Such knowledge as will lead him straight,  
 Eschewing ill, to heaven's fair gate.  
 For whatsoe'er the world hath seen  
 Of good or ill, inscribed hath been  
 In chronicles of bygone times,  
 Which memory keep of basest crimes,  
 While close beside them may be read  
 The glorious deeds by heroes sped.

Briefly, a man from books may learn  
 Virtue to love and vice to spurn. 19470  
 Noble each clerk is, or should be  
 (Whether a learned master he  
 Or scholar), and of gracious mind,  
 Noble and courteous, sweet, and kind;  
 For if they be not so, then they  
 Thereby but evil hearts betray.  
 Advantage scholars have above  
 Rude men who chase and woodcraft love,  
 And therefore none are valued less  
 Than clerks in whom lacks gentleness, 19480



Since they, with consciousness awake  
 To virtue, her fair paths forsake,  
 And clerks who wed their souls to vice  
 Will, in the Lord of Paradise,  
 When comes the dreadful dooming day,  
 Find sterner judge than people lay,  
 Who ne'er in books were trained to read  
 How vice to shun and virtue speed.  
 And though a king should chance to be  
 A man well lettered, yet would he  
 Have far less time, amid state cares,  
 To read, than one who cassock wears  
 In cloistered cell.

True  
nobility

19400

And therefore less  
 Princes oft gain of true noblesse,  
 Than studious monk or well-read clerk,  
 Who scriptures may digest and mark  
 Unhindered.

If men fain would learn  
 How they for high noblesse may earn  
 Distinction, with this golden lore  
 Their minds and memories let them store :

19500

Whoso would practise true noblesse  
 Must cast off pride and idleness,  
 Himself to arms or study give,  
 And pure of soul and spirit live.  
 In sweet humility attired,  
 His heart should be with kindness fired  
 Toward every man, except he meets  
 Some foe who scornfully entreats  
 His gentleness. In every way  
 To dames and damsels let him pay

19510

Praise of Due honour, yet affiance great  
 study Repose not in them lest too late  
 He find, alas ! that cruel scorn  
 Is all the fruit his grace hath borne.  
 Honour such men should find, and fame  
 Be theirs, unstained or scathed by blame,  
 And they alone win praising wide,  
 By name of Noble dignified.  
 A knight should never shame his sword,  
 Nor ever let unseemly word 19520  
 Escape his lips, of honour fain  
 And scorning sloth, like good Gawain,  
 Or Robert of Artois, whose ways  
 Were noble from his cradle days,  
 'Through all his life, for largess free  
 Renowned, and unstained chivalry,  
 And in the field of honour great  
 Ere yet his years reached man's estate.  
 A knight who holds him in such guise,  
 Noble and valiant, pure and wise, 19530  
 Beloved shall be where'er he go,  
 The good man's friend, the recreant's foe.

And that man eke should honoured be  
 Who spends his lifedays patiently  
 In study, and, by learning led,  
 In virtue's paths delights to tread.  
 And gathered from the days of yore  
 Of bright examples many a score,  
 Could I recount, but sorely doubt  
 To tire you ere my tale ran out. 19540  
 In olden days good times were then,  
 Kings, emperors, and great noblemen

# THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE 137

'To learned clerks much honour showed,  
 And goodly gifts on them bestowed.  
 To poets who life's burdens leaven  
 Were villas and fair gardens given.  
 Virgil, the sweet-voiced, was apaid  
 Right generously, and master made  
 Of beauteous Naples, city fair,  
 Which Lavardins and Paris dare  
 Not vie with. In Calabria's plains  
 Had Ennius gardens, for the pains  
 Wherewith he wrought sweet verse—but no,  
 'I were vain o'er all the roll to go ;  
 With names could I fill many a page  
 Of men who, though their lineage  
 Was lowly, yet to fame did mount,  
 By genius, above king or count,  
 And worthily were held to be  
 The flower of all nobility.  
 But those good days are dead, alas !  
 And now may men a lifetime pass  
 In studying deep philosophy,  
 L'aring therefor o'er land and sea  
 In poverty and misery great,  
 Begging their bread at Dives' gate,  
 Barefooted, clad in threadbare gown,  
 Wending their way from town to town,  
 Esteemed by kings not worth a hen,  
 Although far worthier gentlemen,  
 (May God preserve me from the shivers)  
 Than sparks who daily fill their quivers  
 To shoot poor hares, or those one  
 sees  
 Stablished in princely palaces.

Poets  
 honoured  
 of old

19550

19560

19570

Alex-  
ander the  
Great

And he who claimeth to inherit  
Noblesse, though void himself of merit,  
By forbears won in earlier day,  
Shall he be counted noble? Nay!  
A common wretch should he be deemed,  
Far less by honest men esteemed,  
Than had he been base beggar-born.  
'T'ow to such an one I'd scorn,  
Although he chanced to be the son  
Of Alexander great, who won,  
By bold adventure, empire o'er  
The wide-stretched earth, from shore to  
shore.

19580

And when his arms had brought alow  
Beneath his rule each vigorous foe,  
And many a tribe of timorous folk  
Had tamely bent beneath his yoke,  
Grew then to vanity so great  
That earth proved incommensurate  
With his desires, and he exclaimed  
'That, all too narrowly was framed  
The world for him, and so amain,  
His soul of mightier conquests fain,  
He smote upon the gates of hell,  
Yearning the powers thereof to quell.  
And when the gods of Hades heard  
His stroke, alarm their bosoms stirred,  
Lest this was He who by the Cross  
Should compensate for Adam's loss,  
Break down hell's bars, subdue their pride,  
And heaven's bright portals open wide,  
Delivering those from hell for whom  
On Calvary He suffered doom.

19590

19600

Let us suppose, though ne'er it can  
 So happen, that no gentleman  
 I ever formed, nor e'er allowed  
 Great men to rise from out the crowd,  
 Who then could claim nobility?  
 Therefore to all it clear must be,  
 Who care hereof to face the truth,  
 That no nobility, forsooth,  
 Can any boast, unless he strives  
 To emulate the noble lives  
 Of his forbears. And this to do  
 Should be the aim of all those who  
 Would fain be stamped with honour's  
 seal,

**What  
 men are  
 noble?**

19610

Yet scorn from ancestors to steal  
 A glory which they merit not.  
 For all men will agree, I wot,  
 That nothing can confer noblesse  
 On any living man, unless  
 His hand some noble work hath done;  
 For glory by a father won  
 Can no more give his children fame  
 Than can his misdeeds shadow blame.  
 Honour to him who merits it!  
 But he who vilely spends his wit  
 In wasteful sin and harmful vice,  
 Or usury and avarice,  
 Or boastfulness and foolish pride,  
 And is in leasing double-dyed,  
 A wastrel of his goods, though he  
 Spends nought in alms or charity,  
 While in his heart all crimes abound;  
 (And of such sort, alas! are found

19020

19680

**Nobility** Plenteous examples, people born  
**intrans-** Of parents who would hold in scorn 19640  
**missible** A villain deed,) unjust it were  
 That one of such a sort should share  
 In glory by his fathers won,  
 Through valiancy in days long gone :  
 He should, forsooth, be held more base  
 Than one who springs of meanest race.

And men of sense will all agree  
 That a wide gaping gulf must be  
 'Twixt those who noble actions do  
 For fair renown, and misers, who 19650  
 Expend long days of life and health  
 To win and garner boundless wealth  
 With restless zeal that nought can tire.  
 For he within whose heart desire  
 Rages to bring beneath his hands  
 Great heaps of treasure, houses, lands,  
 Jewels and coin, although he hold  
 A hundred thousand marks of gold,  
 May leave his goods to whom he will.  
 But though a man his blood should spill 19660  
 To garner honour, or should store  
 His heart abrim with learned lore,  
 Neither his valour, worth, or wit  
 Can he to well-loved heirs transmit.  
 Can one bequeath his learning? Nay—  
 Nor honour, nor renown, he may  
 Devise, but can instruction give,  
 If heirs will learn, how well to live;  
 But no man others' hearts can fire  
 With virtue if they lack desire 19670

# THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE 141

Thereto ; good counsel some folk find  
 Less value than an apple-rind ;  
 Much rather they, forsooth, are fain  
 Goods, lands, and chattels rich to  
 gain.

The name  
 of gentle-  
 man

Each cries : A gentleman am I !  
 Since that's the name those commonly  
 Are called by, who inherit what  
 Their ancestors by merit got,  
 The prize of wit or fair endeavour ;  
 But they love hawking by the river,  
 Or following up with horse and hound  
 The merry chase, the full year round,  
 And though but idle oafs they be,  
 Pose as the flower of chivalry.  
 Such men are not of noble birth,  
 But only trade upon the worth  
 Of others, and when they appeal  
 To ancient lineage make, but steal  
 The honoured name of those who won  
 Nobility in days bygone.

10680

10690

For though all men are born through me  
 Equal, straightway they wish to be  
 Of other nobleness than that  
 I give, which they, forsooth, find flat,  
 Although no name can be more fair  
 Than native freedom, which all bear  
 Of my free gift, and with it too  
 Reason God gave, which makes all, who,  
 As human beings draw life's breath,  
 Like gods and angels—save for death.  
 But man a mortal is, and hence  
 'Twixt God and man wide difference

19700

**Ancestry** Is set, and thus must men achieve  
**is nought** Such noblesse as they ne'er receive  
 From God or Nature. Well, I wot,  
 If one low-born inherit not  
 Fair virtue, neither doth a king  
 Or count. A far more shameful thing,  
 I hold it, if a king's son strays  
 From virtue's paths to evil ways, 19710  
 Than if a man prove reprobate,  
 Born of a sire of low estate,  
 As shoemaker, or swineherd, or  
 Ploughman, or other rustic boor.  
 More honourable 'twere, I ween,  
 To noble Gawain, had he been  
 Son to some coward who had stayed  
 At home, of valiant deeds afraid,  
 Than if, though born of Renouard, he  
 Had shown him base and cowardly. 19720

But fool were he who dared gainsay  
 That, when Death flits a king away,  
 Of more note is his passing than  
 That of a churl or borel man,  
 And farther reaching is his word.  
 But thence ariseth the absurd  
 And foolish creed that, when the sky  
 With comets flames, a king shall die,  
 For though nor king nor prince there were  
 Throughout the world who sceptre bare, 19730  
 And though all rank and rule should cease,  
 Alike in time of war or peace,  
 Yet will celestial bodies breed  
 Comets with flaming hair, and speed



Con-  
cerning  
comets

'Them o'er the arc of heaven to blaze  
 By night, the wondering world to maze,  
 Provided that the air supplies  
 The matter whence their flames arise.  
 Like fiery dragons do they fly,  
 Scattering bright stars across the sky, 19740  
 Appearing as they fell from out  
 The heavens, as some folk vainly doubt.  
 But reason teaches nought at all  
 Can from the heavens escape or fall,  
 Nor ever can corruptive worm  
 Affect their fabric fast and firm,  
 For all therein is so arranged  
 That nought can perish, nought be  
 changed.  
 No matter can derange their state,  
 Or to their substance penetrate ; 19750  
 However subtle it may be,  
 Nothing can enter possibly  
 Therein, nor can aught pass indeed  
 Therefrom, except the rays which speed  
 From out them and swift passage take,  
 Yet ne'er their matter waste or break.  
 Within their power the laws they hold  
 Of summer's heat and winter's cold,  
 And snow and hail they cause to fall,  
 Now thickly sown, now thin and small, 19760  
 And by their oppositions they  
 Have influence great in many a way ;  
 Even as they retreat afar,  
 Or coming near conjoinèd are  
 To one another, till some die  
 Almost with fear when in the sky

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**Astral influence** They see eclipses ; others think  
 The world is on destruction's brink  
 When brilliant planets disappear,  
 As move they with the circling year, 19770  
 Though, if they understood my laws,  
 'Twere clear to them that little cause  
 They have for fear.

By tempests driven  
 And lashed to madness, towards high heaven  
 Big waves rush up, the clouds to kiss,  
 Then fall, as they by them, ywis,  
 Were vanquished, and forthwith no more  
 The sea dares bellow, rage, and roar,  
 Nor cause his waves to spring on high,  
 Save those which must eternally 19780  
 By the moon's influence fall and rise ;  
 Restraint they laugh at and despise.  
 And if some man were fain to know  
 What miracles on earth below  
 The bright stars work, so great are  
 they,

I answer, that should one display  
 Them all at full, no book would hold  
 Their tale by when 'twere fully told.  
 Thus note I that the heavens acquit  
 Themselves in manner fair and fit 19790  
 Towards me, and in no point fail  
 To prove them of right good avail.

Nor do I of the elements  
 Complain, which work out my intents,  
 Blending together as it were  
 The revolutions of the air.

All living things beneath the moon  
 Are mortal, as I've said eftsoon,  
 And never creature yet so well  
 Nourished itself, but that it fell  
 'Neath death as Nature doth direct  
 At last by definite effect.  
 This is a rule so absolute  
 And fixed, that vain is all pursuit  
 Of means whereby to change its course ;  
 It varieth ne'er, nor slacks its force.

Plants  
 obey  
 Nature

10800

Nor will I of the plants complain,  
 Which all are of my hestings fain  
 And faithfully respect my laws,  
 As being primal spring and cause  
 Of life ; they duly send forth roots,  
 And boles and branches, flowers and fruits ;  
 And, in succession, being give  
 To others when they cease to live.

19810

Nor with the birds or scale-bound fish  
 Do I find fault ; my every wish  
 Fulfil they with abundant care,  
 Proving what love they towards me bear ;  
 Each one I find a worthy scholar,  
 And all set shoulder to the collar  
 According to their kind and use,  
 All breed, engender, and produce,  
 While none are left to fail and die,  
 Which fains my heart exceedingly.  
 Nor of the beasts whose heads are prone  
 To seek earth's face I make my moan,

19820

**Man** For ne'er against me they rebel,  
**insults** But love my yoke, and serve me well :  
**Nature** To me they cling, and as I bid  
 They act, as erst their forbears did. 19830  
 Right merry festivals they keep,  
 When males upon the females leap,  
 Engendering in their lustihood  
 What time soe'er to them seems good.  
 Thereof but small debate beasts make,  
 But simply love for love's sweet sake ;  
 What this desires, will that afford  
 With kind and debonair accord ;  
 And with the blessings I provide  
 All vow their hearts full satisfied. 19840  
 'The smallest creatures men despise,  
 Beetles, ants, gnats and butterflies,  
 And worms that from corruption come,  
 Finding in carcases a home,  
 And snakes and adders (in whom lurk  
 Fell poison) joy to do my work.

Man only, unto whom I've given  
 Freely of all things under heaven,  
 Man, whom alone I formed with face  
 Uplift to seek God's dwelling-place, 19850  
 Man, whom alone from earth's dull sod  
 I made in image of his God—  
 My last and fairest work—'tis he  
 Alone insults and angers me.  
 Yet hath he not in all his frame,  
 Except what through my bounty came,  
 One single quality or member  
 More precious than a lump of amber ;

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Nay, even to his very soul  
My debtor is he for the whole,  
Saving one thing.

Nature's  
19860 gifts

Through me, who hold  
O'er him dominion manifold,  
Man hath three powers of body and soul,  
Nay, soothly may I say his whole  
Existence he derives from me,  
The power to live, to feel, to be,  
And would the wretch prove good and wise,  
A glorious field before him lies,  
For God's great love to him hath given  
What things soe'er exist 'neath heaven, 19870  
That he may at his will employ  
Their uses, nor thereof be coy.  
His being hath he from the bones  
Of mother earth, Deucalion's stones ;  
With thriving herbs he lives and deals,  
And with mute living beasts he feels.  
Nay more, in understanding he  
May with God's angels equal be.  
What more of man then can I say ?  
Whate'er he wills to do he may ; 19880  
A small world in himself is he,  
But worse than wolf entreateth me.  
Man's wit I clearly recognise  
As something that beyond me lies,  
A subtle and mysterious thing  
Which was not of my fostering.  
Whate'er is mortal count I mine,  
But have no hand in things divine.  
And Plato clearly showeth what  
Belongs to me, and what doth not : 19890

**Plato's words** When speaking of the gods that ne'er  
 Shall suffer death, he saith : They were  
 By their creator ordered so,  
 That death they ne'er should undergo,  
 But subject to his will must be  
 'Their gift of immortality.  
 All Nature's works, moreover, saith  
 Great Plato, are foredoomed to death ;  
 In God's sight mean are they, and must,  
 Their part outplayed, return to dust. 19900  
 Nature before the Almighty power  
 Of God hath but a passing hour,  
 He as in lightning flash doth see  
 Time past, time present, time to be.  
 Great Emperor is he, lord, and king ;  
 Unto the gods he saith : Ye spring  
 From me as father. This well know  
 All learned men who read Plato ;  
 The words he wrote when Greece was young  
 Read thus in our rude English tongue : 19910

' O gods, your God am I, creator,  
 Father, and prime originator  
 Of all your being, every feature  
 You own proclaims each one my creature.  
 Nature but made you mortal, I  
 Alone give immortality.

For nought there is by Nature made,  
 But what must in due season fade  
 And perish, whatso care thereto  
 She gives, but whatsoe'er is due 19920  
 To God's right hand is pure, and clear  
 Of all defect, and hath no peer,

Nor ever can corruption see,  
 Since made 'tis incorruptibly.  
 Hence must it be perforce allowed,  
 'That though ye all are freely dowed  
 With life by my supremest will,  
 Yet in some measure are ye still  
 Beneath corruption's power, unless  
 I save ye from that wretchedness :  
 By nature must ye surely die,  
 But my strong will may death defy,  
 For undivided power is mine  
 O'er all things, human and divine,  
 'That bind your life, therein must lie  
 Your hope to live eternally.'

**Birth of  
 Christ**

19980

Herein you have the pith and wit  
 Of what, erewhile, great Plato writ,  
 Who might of God with reason dare  
 To write, since none like him have e'er  
 Such knowledge of His nature shown,  
 Nor to their fellow-men made known  
 The depth of His great love, or how  
 They must to Him in reverence bow ;  
 But even his mind could not suffice  
 To grasp God's all-surpassingness,  
 For in no place on earth was room  
 E'er found for Him, but in the womb  
 Of one pure Virgin, who, when she  
 Her God within her felt to be,  
 His nature better understood  
 Than Plato, through sweet motherhood ;  
 For when she knew, what blessed weight  
 Moved in her, was her soul elate,

19940

19950

**Plato** Assured that he whose gentle strife  
**over-** Brought joyance to her, was of life  
**passed** The source eternal, centre he  
 Of all existence, though none see  
 The bounds of his circumference,  
 His limit being but space immense. 19960  
 The wondrous triangle is he  
 Whose angles are but unity,  
 And though the triple corners run  
 Apart, they are, forsooth, but one.  
 The circle 'tis triangular  
 And the triangle circular,  
 Which in the Virgin harboured it.  
 And this great mystery the wit  
 Of Plato overpassed, for how  
 Could he suppose that God would bow 19970  
 To human flesh, or unity  
 Conceive, combined with trinity.  
 Man's understanding God alone  
 Created, and on him the boon  
 Freely bestowed, a gifting great.  
 Alas! that I must needs relate  
 How to betray his God he used  
 That gift; but when he so abused  
 This blessing, thinking to deceive  
 His God, he fatally did weave 19980  
 His own deception, and alas!  
 My master thence through death must  
 pass,  
 When without me man's flesh he fain  
 Took on him to spare men the pain  
 Of hell's fierce fire. Yes, without me!  
 I know not how, except that he



Sybil's  
prophecy

Almighty is. Amazed I stood  
 When I beheld the motherhood  
 Of holy Mary, in whose breast  
 Her Maker for a while took rest, 1111111  
 And then for wretched man was born,  
 And lastly died on tree forlorn.  
 By me was ne'er such wonder wrought  
 As that a virgin should be brought  
 To childbed's pains. And yet, forsooth,  
 Through Jews and paynims was the truth  
 (Of that great incarnation done  
 Of God the Father's only son,)  
 By prophesy made clear and plain,  
 Whereof our hearts may well be fain : 20000  
 In Virgil's book, Bucolics hight,  
 He tells how Sybil's utterance dight  
 Words by the Holy Ghost inspired,  
 Saying: 'A lineage long desired  
 Shall from high heaven on earth be sent  
 To cheer the nations worn and spent;  
 Back shall the age of iron be rolled,  
 And once more reign the age of gold.'  
 And Albumazar, Arab great,  
 In this wise did prognosticate : 20010  
 'Within the sign of Virgo shall  
 A glorious Virgin's birth befall,  
 A virgin, yet a mother blest,  
 Shall to her father give the breast,  
 And as a brother's love shall be  
 Her husband's in its purity.'  
 These words all men may read who  
 look  
 In Albumazar's famous book,

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**Man un-  
grateful** And all good Christians will remember  
That golden day of rich September, 20020  
When to a longing outworn earth  
Befell that boon—our Lady's birth.

E'en as my words the tale afford,  
'Tis known to Jesus Christ our Lord,  
With what strong zeal and labour I  
Have striven for man unceasingly.  
He is the end of all my work,  
Yet doth he ever seek to shirk  
My laws, and dares my hand upbraid ;  
Nor to the traitorous renegade 20030  
Will all that I can do suffice.  
What words can paint his ingrained vice?  
The benefits my hands have wrought  
For him are countless, though as nought  
He reckons them, but on my head  
Heaps contumelies unnumberèd.

Most worthy chaplain, gentle priest,  
Am I not wrong to love this beast,  
And still with gifts his life to bless,  
While he returns but bitterness ? 20040  
God's holy rood I call to aid !  
Alas ! that e'er vile man I made !  
But by the death He underwent,  
Whom Judas' kiss betrayed and shent,  
And 'gainst whom Longius bent his lance,  
I will make known man's insolence  
Before that God who first displayed  
To me the man his will had made

In his own form—ah ! misery !  
 Being a woman nought can I  
 Restrain my tongue, but must reveal  
 The indignant anger that I feel.  
 A grievous insult 'tis that he  
 Hath thus estranged himself from me,  
 And therefore I his vice and crime  
 Will paint, to shame him for all time.

20050 **Man-  
kind de-  
nounced**

Man is a murderer, proud and base,  
 A thief, a felon void of grace,  
 A hateful, despitous self-seeker,  
 A gluttonous wretch, an evil-speaker, 20060  
 A forger, a disloyal traitor,  
 A recreant vile, a false delator  
 Of honest folk, a perjured liar,  
 Immersed, nay steeped, in avarice dire,  
 A hypocrite, whom hell befall,  
 A miscreant wretch unnatural.  
 In short, he sells him for a price  
 As bond and thrall to blackest vice,  
 Which harbourage within him gains,  
 And binds his will more fast than chains 20070  
 Of iron. Seeks not that man death  
 Who to vile sin surrendereth  
 His soul? And since all things must go  
 Back to the source from whence they flow,  
 Bethink you, when vile man shall stand  
 To hear his sentence at the hand  
 Of him to whom unending love  
 He should have rendered far above  
 All else, and kept his body pure,  
 How shall he venture to endure 20080

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L

Punish- His God's stern glance? And with what  
 ment eye  
 threat- Shall he, who sits the wretch to try,  
 ened Regard him who hath travailed so  
 On earth that he hath nought to show  
 Of worthy work, but hath abused  
 The talent he should fain have used  
 To serve his Lord? Both great and small  
 'Neath equal condemnation fall,  
 As though they had alliance sworn  
 Evil to love and good to scorn, 20090  
 And honour thus full oft is seen  
 Held but of low account, I ween ;  
 And thence men needs must undergo,  
 Or grievous death, or worldly woe.  
 Alas! how must the caitiff shrink,  
 As all his crimes he needs must think  
 And ponder over, ere he comes  
 To stand before the judge, who sums  
 And weighs his crimes with balance true!  
 What refuge shall he turn him to? 20100  
 What guerdon can he then expect,  
 Save that his wretched throat be decked  
 With cord to drag him down to hell,  
 Chained and confined in dismal cell,  
 Or forced to join the torturous revels  
 Of Satan and his million devils?  
 Then shall he be in cauldron boiled,  
 Or roasted, fore and aft, well oiled,  
 O'er glowing coals on red-hot grill ;  
 Or on a wheel, which ne'er stands still, 20110  
 Be, like Ixion, turned by hands  
 Of demons armed with flaming brands.

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Hell's  
torments

Or else with hunger dire and thirst  
Suffer like Tantalus accurst,  
Who, while immersed in rippling waves,  
One slaking sup of water craves,  
But ne'er the tide, that laps his chin  
And mouth, can find its way therein ;  
And still fierce hunger's pangs outwear  
His body and his entrails tear, 20120  
Until at last of famine he  
Must perish, raging horribly,  
Yet void of power is he to close  
His teeth on fruit which beats his nose,  
For when he fain his mouth would ply,  
Forthwith the apples upwards fly.  
Or else some miserable wretch,  
His limbs and sinews all astretch,  
Must push uphill a monstrous stone,  
Which o'er him rolls as falls he prone, 20130  
Like thy dread task, O Sisyphus !  
Whose weary years are wasted thus.  
Or wretches fill a sieve-made tun  
With water—task fulfilled of none,  
'Though labouring restlessly as bees—  
Witness the sad Danaïdes.  
And you, fair Genius, know right well  
How Tityus in the nether hell  
Was cast supine, his limbs outspread,  
While vultures on his entrails fed. 20140

And many another torment dire  
Of numbing ice, or scorching fire  
Shall fall upon this rebel race,  
Who dare insult me face to face,

**Cupid's  
complaint** Until I be revenged on those  
 Whose crimes declare them as my foes.  
 For there the impartial judge doth sit,  
 Who doometh with unerring wit :  
 And if to pity gave he rein,  
 'Then mercy might the bargain gain 20160  
 Sped by some usurer merciless ;  
 But just is He, nor more nor less.  
 Therefore let him take heed who hath  
 His feet let stray from virtue's path.

Leaving to God the task to deal  
 With men's misdeeds, assured I feel  
 That with unerring wisdom he  
 Will doom and pardon righteously.  
 But the complaint that Cupid makes  
 Strikes loudly on mine ear and shakes 20160  
 My very being, and to you,  
 O father, earnestly I sue  
 To help me in my deep distress,  
 The root whereof I fain confess  
 To be that recreant men refuse  
 My blessings to accept and use.

## C

Herein is told how Nature sends  
 Genius to Cupid and his friends,  
 That he their courage may excite  
 With unabated zeal to fight. 20170

**G**ENIUS, whose lips so sweetly speak,  
 My charge is that you forthwith seek  
 The God of Love, whose heart doth feel  
 For me more yearning than the steel

**Nature  
salutes  
Cupid**

Hath for the loadstone, ever he  
 Speedeth my bidding joyously.  
 Assure him Lady Nature sends  
 Warm salutations, and commends  
 Her likewise to his mother sweet,  
 Dame Venus, since their hearts aye beat 20180  
 In unison; and greetings give  
 To all the valiant lords who live  
 And fight beneath his banner, save  
 False-Seeming, base and treacherous knave,  
 Seeing that he associates  
 With felons, thieves, and reprobates,  
 And men who play the hypocrite,  
 And thence are dubbed in holy writ  
 False prophets, Satan's friends elect.  
 Forced-Abstinence I too suspect 20190  
 Doth to that rabble-rout belong,  
 Who love to do me spite and wrong.  
 For she possesseth to my deeming  
 A wondrous kinship with False-seeming:  
 And I, forsooth, am little fain  
 To welcome either of the twain.  
 Perceiving how they seem to be  
 At home 'mid evil company,  
 'Twere well, methinks, at any cost  
 That Love should drive from out his  
 host 20200  
 Such miscreants, though in mind I bear  
 How useful are the accursed pair,  
 And what small progress can be made  
 In lovers' war without their aid.  
 For true 'tis, this unholy twain  
 The cause of Cupid oft sustain,

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**Nature's message** And those who through them win their end,  
 A charitable eye will lend  
 To their misdeeds.

20210

Dear friend, away,  
 Seek out the God of Love and lay  
 My griefs before him ; not that he  
 Can right and justice gain for me,  
 But that your news may salve the smart  
 Of sorrow that afflicts his heart,  
 The while his cruel foes may thence  
 Dejection great experience.  
 Say you are sent with orders straight  
 And strict to excommunicate  
 All those who dare insult his cause,  
 And bless his friends who keep my laws 20220  
 With willing hearts, as they are writ  
 Within my book for benefit  
 Of those who love me, and ne'er cease  
 To study how they may increase  
 Their race, and worthy homage pay  
 To love throughout their shortlived day.  
 Such folk I count my faithful friends,  
 And for their woes will make amends  
 To them by days of dear delight.  
 But bid them hold in dire despite 20230  
 The vices and gross crimes which I  
 Have told of antecedently,  
 While to the full love's joys they taste.  
 Moreover, prithee, pardon haste  
 To give them, not for ten short years,  
 But plenary, and thus their fears  
 Wipe out for all that they have done  
 When free confession shrift hath won.



And when the host, as nought I doubt,  
 Have welcomed you with deafening shout, 20240  
 And courteous salutations due  
 Both given and received have you,  
 Then in full audience shall be shown  
 The pardon, and my will made known  
 Without delay, thereof take note.

Genius  
 absolves  
 Nature

*The Author.*

Then she dictated, whilst he wrote.  
 'That done, Dame Nature sealed the  
     sheet,  
 And bade him forth with hurrying feet,  
 Saying that if she'd failed in aught,  
 She absolution humbly sought. 20250

Soon as Dame Nature thus had made  
 Her shrift as laws and custom bade,  
 At once she reaped the blessed fruit  
 Of pardon full and absolute  
 At Genius' hand, her kindly priest,  
 Who much her happiness increased,  
 By giving some slight penitence  
 Proportioned to her small offence.  
 Then he enjoineeth her to go  
 Back to her forge, and labour so 20260  
 As she was wont, cast off her fears,  
 Comfort her heart, and dry her tears,  
 And faithful in her work to be,  
 Until the King should set her free  
 Therefrom, whose power and mightiness  
 May all undo, and all redress.

*Nature.*

**Nature's  
work-  
shop** With willing heart, fair sir, she cries.

*Genius.*

Quoth Genius: Straightway I arise  
To do your bidding, and give aid  
To those who love's deep waters wade. 20270  
But this silk chasuble I first  
Must cast, wherein I'm now immersed,  
And likewise doff both alb and rochet.

*The Author.*

Then all three hung he on a crotchet,  
And in a secular garment dight  
His limbs, more comely far and bright,  
As if he would the dance essay;  
And with spread wings took thence his way.

## CI

This tells how Lady Nature went  
To work—as on much labour bent— 20280  
Within her forge straightway, for she  
Loves to do all things thoroughly.

**T**HEN to her workshop Nature goes,  
Wielding her sledge with mighty blows  
Defly, as she erewhile had done.

*The Lover.*

The wings of Genius had outrun

Meantime the wind itself, and he  
 Soon reached Dan Cupid's company.  
 But there False-Seeming found he not :  
 For soon as ever wind he got  
 Of how the harridan was caught,  
 Who had for me an entry wrought  
 Within the close, that I therein  
 Might par lance with Fair-Welcome win,  
 Forthwith decamped he out of view,  
 Nor stayed one wink to bid adieu.  
 But as it happed, not yet from thence  
 Was gone Constrained-Abstinence,  
 Who set herself at once to fly  
 And gain False-Seeming's company  
 Whene'er she saw the priest appear,  
 So that they scarce could hold her there,  
 For greatly feared she, as I ween,  
 To be with priest in converse seen,  
 And four gold bezants would forego,  
 Ere that False-Seeming saw her so.

Genius  
 and the  
 host

20200

20200

Genius thereon, without delay,  
 In fashion due, I scarce need say,  
 'The host saluteth, and straight out  
 Declares what 'tis he comes about,  
 Omitting not one single word.  
 You well may judge what welcome stirred  
 The air, as with unbounded joy  
 The lords beheld the new envoy,  
 And therefore shorten up my tale,  
 Lest ears grow tired, and patience fail.  
 For those who preach at weary length,  
 Their hearers tire with waste of strength,

20810

Venus is And longsome preachers all alone  
 merry May find them ere their sermon's done. 20820

By Cupid Genius was arrayed  
 In chasuble, right richly made,  
 And decked with ring and cross, and  
 mitre  
 Than glass more clear, than crystal brighter;  
 But none would further tiring stay,  
 Consumed so with impatience they,  
 To hear him read from out the book.  
 Dame Venus so with laughter shook,  
 That nowise could she hold her still,  
 O'erpowering joyance seemed to fill 20880  
 Her every vein; and to enforce  
 The anathema when the priest's discourse  
 Was done, she gave a taper bright  
 Into his fist, which scarce was dight  
 Of virgin wax.

Genius no more  
 Delayed, but brief in hand, made for  
 The vantage of a high-built stage,  
 Whence might he all men's ears engage.  
 The barons placed themselves around,  
 Seated on many a grass-grown mound; 20940  
 And then his charter he displays,  
 While, with his hand, the wind's four ways,  
 He signs to them to hold their peace,  
 And all with wink and nudge surcease  
 Their noise and listen, whilst that he  
 Thus speaks with bold authority.

## CII

In Venus' presence Genius stands,  
 And sets forth Nature's high commands,  
 While all within the mighty host,  
 Who Cytherea's service boast, 20350  
 Give ear, till makes he clear and plain  
 What work doth most his mistress fain.

*Genius.*

**B**Y Lady Nature's high behest,  
 Whose rule extends from east to west, Oration  
by Genius  
 As constable and vicar-general  
 Of God, the emperor sempiternal,  
 Who sits as in a tower above  
 The world which owns his power and love,  
 And over which appointeth he  
 Nature as queenly deputy, 20360  
 Who all administers and rules  
 By the bright stars, which are but tools  
 Beneath her sway, to influence  
 All mundane things, by ordinance  
 Of him who doth on her confer  
 The office of his minister,  
 Through whom all creatures have been born  
 Since first on Eden broke the morn,  
 And who describeth limits to  
 Their fullness and increase, and who 20370  
 No living thing hath made in vain  
 Beneath the heavens, which aye are fain  
 To move round earth by night and day  
 Without cessation or delay,  
 And duly measured distance keep,  
 Whether aloft or in the deep :

Nature's true friends May those be excommunicate,  
 As men disloyal and reprobate,  
 Accursed for aye, past all respite,  
 Who fail those works to use aright 20380  
 Whereon hath Nature lavished all  
 Her love, or whether great or small  
 They chance to be.

But if one spends  
 His life to further Nature's ends,  
 And loves her, that will well suffice  
 To set the gates of Paradise  
 Ajar for him. Yea, even so  
 Shall he be meet for heaven as though  
 Good shrift he'd made, and shall through  
 me  
 Find grace; his sins my load shall be. 20390

In vain hath bounteous Nature given  
 To those dull folk, whom sloth doth leaven,  
 Tablets for styles, and hammers strong  
 For anvils, and stout coulters long  
 To ear the earth, by laws which she  
 Administers benignantly :  
 And pastures, not with rocks bestrewn,  
 But well with grass and herbage grown,  
 Which loving culture will repay  
 Of spud and hoe from day to day : 20400  
 But if her children choose to shirk  
 Her will, all vain must prove her work.  
 Kind Nature's self do they destroy,  
 Who of their labour prove so coy  
 As let her fertile fallows lie  
 Untilled, while they stand idly by,

That she hath made so fair and good,  
 With will, if they but understood  
 Her ways, to give her works new birth,  
 Lest death triumphant ride o'er earth. 20110  
 Well may those hang their heads for  
 shame

Death to  
 be with-  
 stood

Whose thriftless sloth my words proclaim,  
 Who wilfully the trouble spare  
 Themselves upon the tablets fair  
 To write their names, or to achieve  
 Such work as may hereafter leave  
 Their stamp upon the world. Alas!  
 Their despite leads to such a pass,  
 That soon the anvils will be seen  
 Moss-grown for want of use, I ween; 20420  
 Stout hammering doth their vigour cherish,  
 But if that cease, ere long they perish,  
 For rust will soon to anvils cling  
 When no more hear they hammers ring;  
 And fallows, if men spare the plough,  
 Must barren lie year long, I trow.  
 Quick burial men deserve who take  
 No heed to things God's hand did make,  
 With fashioning of love and care,  
 And to my lady give, that ne'er 20430  
 Her creatures, which perforce must die,  
 Should perish, but eternally  
 Engender still from age to age  
 A never-dying lineage.  
 And grievously those people err  
 Who Nature's work would fain defer  
 Till sixty years be flown, for then  
 Few children born would be to men :

Repair And should this God's good pleasure be,  
 Nature's Man's race must perish utterly, 20440  
 loss And earth's fair plains remain untilld,  
 By beasts devoid of reason filled,  
 Unless it pleased him to replace  
 Man's lineage by some worthier race,  
 Or unto those again give breath  
 Who once had passed the gates of death.  
 Or if all women should remain  
 Virgins till sixty years, amain  
 The world must die, and then were  
 need

Once more creation's work to speed. 20450  
 If it be said that God's good grace  
 Doth out of one man's heart erase  
 The great desire, another's not,  
 (For so is he all-wise, I wot,  
 That ne'er his judgment goes astray,)  
 Then 'tis his pleasure, one must say,  
 That each in equal sort should do,  
 For that one grace befits the two,  
 And thence, alas! must we conclude  
 Of Nature's loss the certitude. 20460  
 Saving that faith belief makes clear,  
 To answer this would cost me dear,  
 For God made all things as we see  
 In the beginning equally,  
 And reasonable souls gave then  
 Alike to women as to men,  
 And not for one but both, his will  
 It is, they should his law fulfil,  
 Keeping the straight and narrow road  
 That soonest leadeth unto God. 20470



## THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE 167

<p>And if he unto some doth give          Command they should as virgins live,          Why should he not with reason strike          A balance just, for all alike?          And so 'twould seem he nought displeased          Would be if man's engendering ceased.          Whoso these questions would resolve,          May let them in his mind revolve;          To wise divines I fain would leave          Such points, let them the knot unweave.</p>	<p><b>Neglect of duty</b></p> <p>20480</p>
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<p>But those who scorn with styles to write,          Which give to mortals life and light,          On tablets delicate, alas!          Nature's intention never was          In moulding them that they should lie          Barren in cold sterility,          But wisely ordered each to each          Should lessons of inscribing teach.          But those who, dight with hammers twain,          Neglect to use their force amain          On the appointed anvils, those          Who kindly Nature's laws oppose          With foolish pride, and mask their vice          By scorning her fair paradise,          Pleasant and fruitful, and aside          Turn them o'er barren ways to ride,          Where none may gather fair renown,          Nor worthy fruit their labours crown,          'Tis in the end but labour lost,          And grievous shall they find the cost,          Though sheltering them behind the vile          Example Orpheus set erewhile,</p>	<p>20490</p> <p>20500</p>
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A curse on sloth Who scorned to bend him to the work  
 Appointed, but essayed to shirk  
 His office, and was therefore sent  
 To hell, doubt not, for punishment.  
 All suchlike folk were worthily  
 Strung high to deck a gallows tree.  
 For he who valueth Nature not  
 Is but a worthless wastrel sot, 20510  
 And she all wretches will disown  
 Who read her scriptures upside down,  
 Perverting thus their worthy sense  
 To mischief under vain pretence ;  
 And who, when Nature's books they read,  
 Give to her fair behests small heed.

May they be excommunicate  
 As worthless, vile, and reprobate,  
 Who thus themselves in crime enwrap !  
 Ere comes their death-day, may it hap 20520  
 To them to lose the staff and scrip  
 They bear as signs of fellowship  
 With worthier folk ; may direst curse  
 Fall on their misused, well-filled purse.  
 And may the style wherewith to write  
 They scorned, be shrivelled in despite,  
 Since never showed they heed or care  
 To use it for the tablets fair,  
 As Nature's hand designed. And since  
 'Twere well that other men should wince 20520  
 To see what punishment is given  
 To those who have 'gainst Nature striven,  
 Their hammers, styles, and bones shall be  
 Cast forth and scattered shamefully.

And may all those who follow in  
 Their steps, partakers of like sin,  
 Be steeped in misery to the lips,  
 And scourged to hell with knotted whips.

Obey  
 Nature

But, for God's sake, I pray that ye,  
 Great lords, such vile examples flee. 20540  
 In Nature's service be ye quick  
 As squirrels 'mid the branches thick,  
 Swift as the wind, or merry bird,  
 'To love by happy springtide stirred.  
 Plenary pardon I bestow  
 For all ye do where'er ye go.  
 In following Nature's high behest  
 Be diligent, and only rest  
 That work you may once more begin  
 When morrow dawns, new joys to win, 20550  
 Wage Nature's war ere stiff and cold  
 Your limbs become—worn, weak, and old.

### CIII

An excommunication dread  
 Genius pronounces on the head  
 Of all and each who dare reject  
 Dame Nature, and her work neglect.

TO work, my masters, then, to work,  
 Seek not Dame Nature's laws to shirk;  
 Unless in labour ye engage  
 With right good will, your lineage 20560  
 Must perish. Seize ye then the plough  
 With ready hands, and cheerly bow

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M

Restore Your backs in manner of the sail  
 death's That bellies to the ruffling gale.  
 ravages The plough-hales let your sturdy hands  
 Grip, and across the fallow lands  
 Drive the bright coulter, while the share  
 Plays its due part, and then with care  
 Scatter around the precious grain,  
 In faith 'twill render back again 20570  
 In autumn-tide a manifold  
 Rich harvesting of bearded gold,  
 Which stored within fair barns may keep  
 The wolf afar while winter's sleep  
 Enwraps the world. The human race,  
 If labour lacks, from off the face  
 Of earth must perish, nought can live  
 Unless with heart and soul men give  
 Themselves to work, and earnest will  
 Possess them all the gaps to fill 20580  
 Wrought in their ranks from day to day  
 By death, whose scythe knows no delay.  
 For as by Nature's laws men die,  
 So 'tis her will that they supply  
 Successors who may carry on  
 The same good work themselves have done  
 With unremitting ardour, and  
 With sons and daughters store the land  
 Which God created for man's use,  
 That done ye well may have excuse 20590  
 From hard laborious toil to rest.

Cadmus, to Pallas' high behest  
 Obedient, a full acre ploughed,  
 And then, by her directing, sowed

<p>The spot with dragons' teeth, from whence          Arose an armed crowd immense          Of knights, who fell to mutual strife,          And so reft each from each the life,          Save five, who Cadmus' fellows were          To raise the walls of Thebes in air,          When he thereto would fain set hand,          And, by the aid of this small band,          Peopled the city came to be,          Which claimeth high antiquity.          A wondrous crop did Cadmus raise,          And won thereby much wealth and              praise,          And even as he wrought, so may ye          Increase your lineage equally.          Confederates good possess ye twain          If ye to multiply are fain ;          And if a third should lack to ye,          'Twill be through your fatuity.          'Tis yours to fight a deadly foe,          And well may three one overthrow—          Nay, 'twere in truth a foul disgrace          If three stout champions should give place          Before one foe, and should they not          O'ercome him would deserve their lot.          Know then I speak of sisters trine,          Of whom two in the strife combine          With you, the third alone shall be          Ever your tireless enemy.          'Through Clotho, who the distaff bears,          It is that each man hither fares,          While Lachesis draws out the thread          Of life, which Atropos the dread</p>	<p><b>Clotho and Lachesis</b></p> <p>20600</p> <p>20610</p> <p>20620</p>
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**Man's** Cuts short ; her sisters deal forth joy,  
**duty** Her office is but to destroy  
 Man's lineage, and she casts about  
 Hither and thither to spy out  
 Fresh victims, and e'en now doth watch  
 If she perchance yourselves may catch.  
 No other beast so fierce, I ween,  
 In earth's wide confines may be seen ;  
 For pity's sake, great lords, I cry,  
 Guard you 'gainst this dire enemy.

20680

Bethink you of your fathers then !  
 And of your mothers ! act like men ;  
 Prove by your deeds that ye are great  
 Of soul, not fallen degenerate !  
 Arouse ye ! and example take  
 From those who laboured for your sake.  
 Saving that they so well maintained  
 Life's battle, never had you gained  
 Existence ; their activity  
 It was, alone, gave life to ye.  
 Bethink you of your lineage,  
 Fair sirs, which still from age  
 Should follow on ; be not dismayed,  
 But set you boldly to your trade ;  
 Your arms unto the shoulders bare,  
 And all your energies prepare,  
 To hammer, forge, and blow the fire,  
 To work out Nature's high desire.  
 Aid Clotho and fair Lachesis  
 To mend life's loss, and if they miss  
 Six threads through spite of Atropos,  
 With twelve straightway make up the loss.

20640

20650

Bend all your powers to multiply  
 The human race, and so defy  
 The work of Atropos, though she  
 Strive hard to win the mastery.  
 This felonous and caitiff wretch,  
 Who keeps her murder-shears astretch  
 To snap men's lives, doth love right well  
 Foul Cerberus, the hound of hell,  
 Who leaps, and bays deep-mouthed, with  
 joy,

20060      The dam  
 of Cer-  
 berus

Whene'er he sees his dam destroy  
 A human life, and through and through  
 Shivers with rage, unless some new  
 Fat morsel his dread mistress cast  
 Into his maw for rich repast ;  
 For well he knows his almoner,  
 And for his nurture looks to her ;  
 And oft, when stricken with dire thirst,  
 Straight hies he to her breast accurst,  
 And from her dugs assuagement wins ;  
 A trine are they in lieu of twins,  
 To suit the triple-headed beast  
 Who growling sucks his loathsome feast.  
 Her gruesome foster-child she never  
 Hath sought to wean, nor doth he ever  
 Seek other drink or aliment  
 Than that and men whose lives are spent.  
 Though heaps of men and women she  
 Casts in his throat unceasingly,  
 No foison the great gulf can fill,  
 But hungers he and ravens still  
 For more ; however great her pains  
 To feed him, nought his maw refrains,

20070

20080

20090

**The** And if some tainted morsels he  
**furies** Lets pass him, fierce Tisiphone,  
 Alecto, and Megaera dread  
 Seize on them for ambrosial bread.  
 These furies three lay wait for men  
 In hell, whom, once within their den,  
 They bind and beat and scourge and strangle,  
 Burn, scorch and grill, and drown and  
     mangle  
 Before three provosts dread who wait,  
 All pitiless, within hell's gate 20700  
 For those whose feet have trod the ways  
 Of crime and wrong in lifetide's days.  
 And this fell three with torments dire  
 Confession absolute require  
 Of all the unhappy wretches whom  
 Forthon they mercilessly doom  
 To expiate all the crimes they've done  
 Since first they saw the rolling sun.  
 Coward were I did I not dare  
 To speak the names these provosts bear ; 20710  
 One, Rhadamanthus hight, the others  
 Minos and Aiacus, his brothers,  
 While Jupiter is known to be  
 'The father of the stern-heart three.  
 They, while on earth, so well maintained  
 Unblemished justice, that they gained  
 The office down in darksome hell  
 Of judges, whenso death befell  
 Their bodies, since stern Pluto saw  
 How well their arms upheld the law, 20720  
 And for their guerdoning did he  
 Give them their dread authority.



For God's sake, noble lords, I pray  
 That you your valiancy display  
 Against such crimes as Nature told  
 Into mine ear (as teardrops rolled  
 Adown her cheeks) while said I mass—  
 Their names I willingly let pass,  
 Yet nought shall wrong her if I fix  
 The tale full told at twenty-six.  
 But if from crime and vileness free  
 You hold yourselves, the Furies three  
 Shall have no power to drag you where  
 The provosts judgments dread declare.  
 I fear 'twould shock you if I told  
 Those crimes and vices manifold,  
 But briefly does the whole expose  
 That fair Romance which hight the Rose,  
 And he who runs may read therein  
 How vice to shun and virtue win.

Judgment  
 on mis-  
 doers

20780

20780

Strive then a virtuous life to lead,  
 Loving, each one, his love indeed,  
 Kiss and embrace unlet by shame,  
 Wrapt in sweet pleasures none dare blame,  
 And when you have your devoir done,  
 Listing the rede my tale hath spun,  
 Then before Nature's master bow,  
 Your Lord and God, and he I trow  
 Your hearts' door against fear will shut  
 When Atropos your thread shall cut.  
 The life is he alike of soul  
 And body—mirror, where the whole  
 Of Nature shows—she ne'er had been  
 Unless she had this mirror seen,

20750

**Listen to** Since it directs and guides her ways,  
**Nature** And only lives she in its rays.  
 Whate'er she knows she did but gain  
 From God, when made his chamberlain :  
 And know, fair sirs : to every word  
 Which you in my discourse have heard, 20760  
 My mistress claims that you should  
     give  
 Attention while on earth you live,  
 (For e'en though in her book you might  
 Read all, 'twere wearisome to write)  
 And strive to learn the whole by heart,  
 In view that whereso ye depart  
 In city, castle, thorp, or town,  
 Ye may right widely make it known,  
 In summer soft or winter keen,  
 To those who have not hither been. 20770  
 Whate'er is well and wisely said  
 Should be with care rememberèd,  
 And more 'tis spread the more will it  
 Gain praise, and all men benefit.  
 My counsellings right worthy are,  
 And unto men more precious far  
 Than sapphires bright or rubies red.  
 Fair sirs, my mistress 'twould bestead  
 Vastly, to scatter far and wide  
 Her hests, and fools and caitiffs chide 20780  
 Who set themselves to violate  
 Her laws, 'gainst wisdom obdurate.  
 But if ye should in worthy sort,  
 By deeds and words yourselves comport,  
 And also by example teach  
 To other folk the good you preach,

God will not close to you those plains	Promised
Where bliss uninterrupted reigns,	rewards
But take you for his very own	
Among that flock whose names are known	20700
'To him familiarly: all they	
Who are his sheep unhindered stray	
'Through fresh green pastures, gently led	
By him whom the unblemished	
Pure Virgin bore, the Lamb divine,	
Arrayed in spotless robes that shine	
With dazzling lustre 'gainst the green	
Untrodden grass, all fair beseen	
With fragrant flowrets; lambkins sweet	
There wander, and each other greet	20800
With tender love, 'neath heaven's pure	
light,	
Amid the fields with blossoms dight.	
But know ye that the pastures there,	
So fresh by nature are and fair,	
That evermore the lovesome flowers,	
Which wake to life through all the hours	
(Spring tire for maids of soft allure),	
Bear petals, new, and fresh, and pure	
As stars that sparkle in the sky,	
Lighting the lush meads twinklingly,	20810
At dawn besprent with pearly dew,	
Which noonday heat endureth through,	
So that at eventide the lawn	
Is fresh as when first broke the dawn,	
As those may prove who fain would win	
The fresh and fragrant blooms therein.	
Nor are those flowers though thickly sown	
Or immature or overblown,	

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Heavenly But perfect in their bright array,  
pastures For by no scorching sun are they  
Destroyed or withered, but the dews  
Which nourish their bright forms effuse  
Delicious fragrance ere they shoot  
'Neath earth to feed each tender root. 20820

And should you say that sheep cannot  
Browse ever on the selfsame spot,  
Since every tender blade and flower  
In suchwise must they soon devour,  
Then learn that as they browse, amain  
New flowers and grass spring forth again. 20830

Deem it no fable if I say  
That ne'er this herbage wastes away,  
Although of pasturing the sheep  
No stint or measure need to keep.  
Their fine white fells are never sold,  
Or shorn to keep off winter's cold  
From men as woven cloth, or fine  
Or coarse as webster's hands incline.  
Their bodies ne'er the knife shall know,  
Nor be on feast-boards set arow, 20840  
Their limbs shall never know disease,  
Nor foul corruption on them seize.  
But the good shepherd who doth lead  
His well-loved sheep abroad to feed,  
Although in dazzling robes arrayed,  
From off their backs no lock hath  
frayed,  
For ne'er despoils he their estate  
Of one poor hair or feather's weight,

# THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE 179

But only loveth to be dight  
Like them in raiment pure and white.

20850      **Eternal  
day**

But that to weary you I fear,  
I'd tell how never night-tide drear  
Darkens those plains ; the perfect day  
Never to evening falls away  
Nor daylight's dawning doth await,  
For there is time nor rathe nor late,  
Day unto night and night to day  
Succeed in one soft heaven-born ray.  
So is it with each hour that flies,  
Within one moment's space it lies,  
Yet every moment doth delay  
Its flight to form unending day  
That falleth never unto night,  
For on it smiles eternal light,  
Nor record how Time speeds I wot,  
Is kept in that all-blissful spot.  
For day endures, yet nothing it  
Of future knows or preterite,  
For, in good truth, the tenses three  
Are ordered so that they may be  
All present, which can never die  
Into the past, nor open lie  
As future—'tis one sphere-like day,  
Which can nor fade nor pass away,  
Preterite, present, future, all  
Into one blissful moment fall,  
Which wasteth not nor passeth by,  
But beams through far eternity.  
The unsetting sun pours down such rays  
As cheer and gladden fairest days

20860

20870

20880

Un- Of springtide, for unchanging spring  
 changing Reigns there, and knows no worsening.  
 spring Forsooth, the earth was not more pure  
 When erstwhile Saturn 'neath his cure  
 Held it, and ruled the golden age,  
 Ere yet he suffered from the rage  
 Of Jove, his tyrant son, who reft  
 His manhood's tokens—treacherous theft.

Nowise despite more cruel can  
 Be wrought upon a mighty man 20890  
 Than to despoil him of that power  
 He had through bounteous Nature's dower;  
 For whoso robs him of that thing  
 Not only cruel suffering  
 Inflicts on him, but sets afire  
 His heart with impotent desire,  
 And kills, moreover, the fond love  
 Of her who erstwhile set above  
 All else his kindness, and alas!  
 Hath he a spouse, 'twill come to pass 20900  
 In likelihood that henceforth she  
 Will count him but a nullity,  
 And give her fondness elsewhere.  
 Great sin those folk commit who dare  
 To reive a man of that which should  
 Bear witness to his lustyhood,  
 For not alone is he thereby  
 Robbed of his native potency,  
 But often men in suchlike case  
 Grow to be coward, mean and base, 20910  
 And leaving chivalry, oft win  
 To ways and manners feminine.

Eunuchs are ne'er accounted good  
 For any deeds of hardihood,  
 Or virtue or nobility  
 Of soul, but well are known to be  
 Courageous only in foul vice,  
 Detraction, spite, and avarice.

Nature  
 disgraced

Women to eunuchs sisters are,  
 Who hold with them more strongly far 20920  
 Than men, for dearly women love  
 Like them the devil's work to move.

Forsooth, although no murderer  
 A gelder be, nor furtherer  
 Of felonies, but conscience clear  
 Of mortal sin can boast, yet near  
 To grievous crime he comes, since he  
 Outrageth Nature wofully  
 Who casts fecundity aside,  
 Which men should ever guard with  
 pride. 20930

But howsoever great this crime  
 Of gelding be, in olden time  
 Jove fell therein, as well ye wot,  
 And thereby the world's empire got  
 Beneath his sceptre, and thus grown  
 Almighty, caused all men to own  
 His rule, and humbly bend the knee  
 To whatsoe'er he might decree.  
 Forthon, as lord supreme he sat,  
 Ordaining this, commanding that, 20940  
 And teaching all mankind how they  
 Should shape their lives from day to day.  
 If ye thereof have will to hear,  
 Give to my words attentive ear.

## CIV

How Jupiter the pleasant saw  
 Affirmed, that every man a law  
 Should be unto himself, and scoff  
 At what his neighbours thought thereof.

Jupiter's  
 reign

**G**REAT Jupiter, who ruleth all  
 The world, would have it so befall 20050  
 That each man should enjoy his ease,  
 And do alone such things as please  
 His appetite: no other law  
 He laid on men except to draw  
 As much of joyance and delight  
 From all around them as they might.  
 Pleasure before all else, quoth he,  
 The study of mankind should be—  
 The foremost thing which all men should  
 Pursue as life's supernal good : 20060  
 And that he might example give  
 To mortals, how he'd have them live,  
 Dan Jupiter his every sense  
 Indulged, that all his followers thence  
 Might mark each fancy and strange whim,  
 And duly take their cue from him.  
 And he who the *Bucolics* wrote,  
 Biddeth us, in the *Georgics*, note  
 That in the Greekish books he found  
 How Jupiter the world turned round : 20070  
 Before the days of Jove no plough  
 Man drove afield with sweat of brow,  
 Nor strove to win from out the soil  
 His scanty food with weary toil.



Nor had men any limits set  
 Of lands, but lived, devoid of let  
 Or hindrance wheresoe'er they would  
 In free community of good.

The  
 golden  
 age de-  
 stroyed

Laws to divide the earth Jove framed  
 Which heretofore no man had claimed, 20980  
 But now each grasped his acres' foison.  
 To serpents gave he deadly poison,  
 And taught the wolves to hunt their  
 prey—

So went the world—woc worth the day.  
 'The honey-bearing ash trees cut  
 He down, and springs and sources shut  
 Of vinous brooks, and fire put out  
 Till men were driven to search about  
 For warmth through his unkindly stint,  
 And flame drew forth from frigid flint; 20990  
 From newborn arts he raised the veil,  
 And taught men how to tell the tale  
 Of stars; he showed them how to make  
 Nets that the wildwood beasts would take,  
 And made the dog man's call obey,  
 An art unknown before that day.

This God, whose despite was the same  
 Towards creatures all, fierce fowls o'ercame,  
 And hatred and deep rancour stirred  
 'Twixt them and many a lesser bird, 21000  
 And everlasting enmity  
 'Twixt hawk and partridge caused to be,  
 And tournaments of kite and crane  
 And falcon 'mid the clouds w<sup>as</sup> fain  
 To further, for the cruel sight  
 To him afforded quick delight.

**Man's in-ventions** Then as device and method sure  
 To make them flutter to the lure,  
 He let them see that morn and eve  
 They might from him their meat receive. 21010

And this same practice hath depraved  
 Gallants in suchwise that enslaved  
 Are they by birds, whom until this  
 Were counted as man's enemies,  
 Because they so destructive were  
 To other birds that wing the air,  
 The which he fain, had he the chance,  
 Would catch as grateful sustenance,  
 Much relishing the small birds' flesh.  
 And Jove taught men the tangling mesh 21020  
 To set around the conies' holes,  
 While ferrets drive them forth in shoals.  
 And such great pleasure and delight  
 Took man to feed his appetite,  
 That fish from river, lake, and sea  
 He seethed and broiled, and skilfully  
 Thereto concocted sauces rare,  
 Of spice and herbs, with subtle care.

'Thus then it was that arts arose,  
 For from necessity outgrows 21030  
 Invention, and by anxious toil  
 Man learns his enemies to foil,  
 And 'neath the prick of hunger's pain  
 To win life's needs he strives amain.  
 And this saith Ovid plainly, who  
 Himself 'twixt youth and age passed  
 through

Honour and shame, and good and ill,  
 As in his books may read who will.  
 In short, Dan Jupiter cared not  
 When 'neath his heel the earth he'd got, 21040  
 But changed all things from good to  
     bad,  
 And bad to worse, like tyrant mad,  
 Proving himself an evil king.  
 Into four parts the eternal spring  
 He clove, and made the rolling year  
 To vary as the times came near  
 Of spring's delight and summer's heat,  
 And autumn's bounteousness replete  
 With fruits, and winter's bitter cold,  
 When men seek house and flee the wold. 21050  
 But the unending spring no more  
 Men revelled in as heretofore,  
 For Jupiter would have it so  
 No longer, nor forsooth was slow  
 When once in power, with envious rage  
 To break the glorious golden age.  
 And soon the silver age, alas!  
 Declined to that of baser brass.  
 And ever as time went, I trow,  
 Mankind fell lower and more low, 21060  
 Till in the iron age at last  
 His lot, fulfilled of woe, is cast,  
 Though this affordeth but delight  
 Unto hell's Gods, who in despite  
 Hold all earth's denizens, and seek  
 Fierce vengeance on their heads to wreak.  
 Tangled within their nets they hold  
 The black-fleeced wanderers from the fold,

**Black** Who ne'er can out their toils escape.  
**sheep** Poor scabby sheep, ill grown of shape 21070  
 Are they who from the narrow line  
 Have wandered, of the Lamb divine,  
 But would had they within his sight  
 Remained, have washed their fleeces white,  
 But having by that broad path strayed  
 That leadeth to the deadly shade  
 Of Hades, there they thickly stand  
 As autumn leaves that strew the land.

But of the flock that wandereth there,  
 None pure unblemished fleeces bear 21080  
 Whereof fine cloth might websters weave,  
 But hair which would one's body grieve  
 Worse than a garment lined within  
 With prickly spinous urchin skin,  
 Designed the tender flesh to fret  
 Whene'er it is athwart it set.  
 Far different is it with those sheep  
 Who white and pure their fleeces keep ;  
 For out their delicate soft wool  
 Men finest cloth may card and full, 21090  
 If so they will, and garments fit  
 And beautiful may weave from it  
 For mightiest emperor or king,  
 Or raiment bright and glistening  
 For God's archangels. Whosoe'er  
 The fortune hath such robes to wear  
 As these I sing, would certes be  
 Enraimented most royally,  
 And well should guard such treasures, for  
 These noble beasts are found no more. 21100

The faithful shepherd watch and ward  
Keeps o'er his flock, and well doth guard  
Their pasturing ground, that ne'er may come  
Black sheep within their peaceful home.  
Vainly most earnest prayer some use  
For entrance there, but He doth choose  
The white sheep with unerring choice,  
Who know the faithful shepherd's voice,  
And follow, where his footsteps lead,  
Midst herbage delicate to feed.

The true  
shepherd

21110

But yet beyond all others fairest,  
Most gentle, beautiful, and rarest  
Of all this white-woolled flock is He  
Who leads their footsteps tenderly  
To pastures new with loving care—  
That joyous Lamb past all compare.  
Right well he wotteth if astray  
One sheep should go, for near the way  
Watcheth the wolf his chance to seize  
A wanderer, though it scarce appease  
The ravening of his ruddy jaws  
One moment. Pity's gentle laws  
He scorneth, nor delays to eat  
His victim, though its heart still beat.  
Fair sirs, this Lamb awaiteth you,  
But thereof shall my words be few,  
Saving to bid you humbly pray  
To God the Father that he may  
Unto his Mother's prayer give ear,  
In suchwise that, untouched by fear  
Of that dread wolf, his sheep may be  
In peace led everlastingly

21120

21130

**Mirth's** Through fair green pastures sprinkled o'er  
**garden** With violets, daisies, and rich store  
 Of fragrant blossoms, while on high  
 Hang roses which nor fade nor die.

For whoso of that garden fair,  
 Closed with the little wicket, (where  
 The Lover saw by happy chance  
 Sir Mirth and Pleasure lead the dance,) 21140  
 Should make comparison with this  
 Bright spot I tell of, would, ywis,  
 Err greatly, for no mortal sight  
 Hath e'er beheld such radiant light  
 As shines therein; it were, forsooth,  
 Fable to pledge 'gainst spotless truth:  
 For he who in this park should tread,  
 And mark its loveliness outspread  
 Before him, readily would swear  
 That fairer far past all compare 21150  
 Is this bright spot, whereof I tell,  
 Than that where Mirth and Pleasure dwell,  
 For that between four walls was bound,  
 But this is formed in subtle round,  
 So perfect, that there ne'er hath been  
 Bright sphere of pearl or beryl seen  
 More lovely. What then shall I say?  
 Lend me a patient ear, I pray,  
 While I recall in fewest words  
 What things the Lover saw—the birds, 21160  
 Trees, flowers within, and on the wall  
 Those paintings which might well appal  
 His heart, so terrible were they.

But who outside this park should stray

# THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE 189

Would creatures far more fierce and fell		The world seen
Encounter, very fiends of hell, Fearful alike to ear and eye Of those who trembling pass them by, And every crime and foul disgrace That make of hell their dwelling-place,	21170	
And Cerberus with triple head Guarding the gate. Before him spread, Moreover, all the world should he Behold in its immensity, And all its riches from of old, And wealth of wonders manifold ; And he should see the unknown deep, And fishes that free revels keep In bitter waters, and the strange Great beasts that ocean's caverns range,	21180	
And waters fresh, both dark and clear, With denizens of stream and mere, And air between the earth and skies Peopled with gnats and butterflies And bright penn'd birds, whose carolling The welkin makes with music ring, And brightness that doth all surround, And all the movements that abound, To dominate the ways and bents Of earth's mysterious elements ;	21190	
And of the wondrous stars that night Reveals he'd see the glorious light, Whether of those that wander or Those that stand fixed for evermore. Forsooth, whate'er fair things there be Within this wondrous park, should he		

**A fleeting** Behold portrayed in suchlike guise  
**show** As paints them clearly to men's eyes.

Now let us to Love's garden win  
 And joys recount contained therein. 21200  
 The Lover saw bright Pleasure lead  
 The dance across a fragrant mead,  
 Ringed round by youths bedeckt with flowers,  
 Or idly whiling summer hours  
 'Neath leafy trees where many a bird  
 The air with gentle cadence stirred,  
 Or near cool founts and waterfalls  
 More tuneful than sweet madrigals,  
 That ripple above gravel bright  
 Unceasingly through day and night, 21210  
 Beside that pine tree which none e'er  
 Excelled since Pepin reigned, and where  
 That fountain all-surpassing springs.

Fair sirs, but vain imaginings  
 Were these fair sights and sounds, I trow,  
 A vain and fleeting worldly show  
 Which soon must perish, for on all  
 That joyous crew dim death must fall  
 Ere long, and, dance and dancers spent,  
 An end be of their merriment ; 21220  
 Since things corruptible amain  
 Must unto dust return again.  
 For that vile nurse of Cerberus,  
 The dark and treacherous Atropos,  
 From whom no creature can escape  
 That ever took on mortal shape,



# THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE 191

Unceasingly in wait doth lie,  
 Man's ever watchful enemy,  
 And smiteth young and old alike,  
 'The gods alone she dare not strike,  
 Since they by nature are divine  
 And drink not death's destructive wine.

**A perfect  
 spot:**

21230

Now would I fain the glorious things  
 Recite, which that fair park enringes,  
 Yet must thereon but lightly touch,  
 Although my heart it grieveth much  
 'To think my words can no wise reach  
 'To paint the joys I fain would teach.  
 No thought of man could hold in view,  
 Nor human tongue give utterance to  
 The marvels that bright spot contains,  
 Where peace endures and radiance reigns  
 Supreme o'er all, nor tell how sweet  
 Those blest ones are whose happy feet  
 Keep measure on a sward of flowers  
 'Through one long day of countless hours.  
 For all things that afford delight,  
 With peace and life eternal dight,  
 Have those who find a dwelling there  
 Where all is good: a fountain fair  
 All drink of, whose abundant wealth  
 Of waters giveth blissful health,  
 And dwindleth not, but all the place  
 Keeps fresh 'neath heaven's unclouded face.  
 All those drink this life-giving wave  
 Who, the black flock forsaking, crave  
 Admittance to this blest abode;  
 And when once through their veins hath flowed

21240

21250

**The contrast** These waters, thirst they nevermore,  
 Or sickness know, as wont of yore, 21260  
 But live untouched by death or fate.  
 When once they pass that happy gate,  
 The joyous Lambkin glads their sight,  
 Whom they may follow day and night  
 Along the straight and narrow path  
 'Neath the good shepherd's eye, who hath  
 Kind care to harbour in his fold  
 His well-loved sheep, their tale full told.  
 This fountain is not that which he  
 Who dreamed beheld beneath the tree, 21270  
 Of marble made; for those who drink  
 Hereof need never fear to sink  
 In death's long slumber, and may mock  
 That lover as a laughing stock  
 Who praised the fountain where Narcisse  
 Died for the lack of self-sought bliss.  
 The fountain perilous that is  
 Bitter and poisonous, ywis,  
 Nor doth the dreamer hesitate  
 Its waters thus to designate, 21280  
 Nor seek its bitterness to hide,  
 But boldly hath to it applied  
 (As 'twere a warning unto us)  
 The name of mirror perilous.  
 Saying that when he dared admire  
 Himself therein, he felt a dire  
 Unhappiness his soul surmount,  
 Good Lord! A sweet and precious fount!  
 A pleasant mirror that, forsooth,  
 Which, when a bright and blithesome  
 youth 21290

Would in the water view his face,  
 Gives back a sick man in his place!  
 Moreover, of this fount he tells  
 How that from two exhaustless wells  
 It bubbles forth, but truth I wot  
 It is, that fountain surgeth not  
 Thence of its own resistless force,  
 But borroweth from an alien source  
 Its waves: and he moreover saith  
 More bright than silver 'tis i' faith!  
 Behold what trumpery and lies  
 He spins with will to blind your eyes,  
 For 'tis, forsooth, so foul and dark  
 That he were clever who could mark  
 His face within its mirror; sad  
 A glance would make one, or stark mad.  
 He saith too that beneath its waves  
 A glittering heap of crystals paves  
 The floor, and when the sun's rays  
 glow

A  
 treacher-  
 ous fount

21800

Thereon, one sees set out arow  
 One half of all the lovesome things  
 That garden's high-built wall enrings,  
 And from the other side may be  
 Beheld the second moiety,  
 So clear the waters, pure and bright!  
 But thick and turbid in my sight  
 Are they, or wherefore show they not  
 At one fair view that amorous spot?  
 Yet no man e'er that sight hath won,  
 Unless bright sunrays fall thereon.  
 Obscurity to them, forsooth,  
 Is natural, and they in truth

21810

21820

194 THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

**Three** Can never of themselves make good  
**streams** The form of one who in their flood  
 Looks down, except the sun's bright glance  
 Their clearness greatly should enhance.  
 But that fair fount, beyond all price,  
 I tell of, decketh Paradise.  
 O give attentive ears while I  
 To sing its marvels humbly try.

21330

The fountain whereof I declare  
 The glories is beyond compare,  
 And such its virtues are, that whole  
 They render many a way-worn soul,  
 And ceaselessly through conduits three  
 Of bright streams flows a trinity.  
 Yet each the other runs so near  
 That they one single stream appear,  
 And though they triple surely are,  
 Yet nought their unity can bar,  
 And though these three and one you count  
 Ten times, to four they'll ne'er amount,  
 For 'tis their common property  
 To be at once both one and three.  
 No other fount wide nature knows,  
 Itself the source from whence it flows,  
 And its own conduit, seeking not  
 For aid extraneous as I wot,  
 Differing therein from founts that fain  
 Appear from alien source to gain  
 New strength. It hath its source and stock  
 More deep and firm than native rock,  
 And needs no fount of marble made,  
 Nor asks of trees their sheltering shade,

21340

21350

# THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE 195

For from its source so high doth spring  
 Its jet, that over everything  
 It towers, and ever from on high  
 Descend the waters plenteously.  
 A little olive tree below  
 They find, 'neath which they gently flow, 21860  
 And when that olive's tender roots  
 Feel the soft wave that round them shoots,  
 'Then gains the tree new nourishment,  
 And through its veins fresh life is sent,  
 Whence push young leaves or luscious  
     fruit ;  
 And grows it from its firm-fixed root,  
 So tall and strong, that ne'er the pine  
 He tells of, the horizon line  
 O'ertopped as this tree doth, nor made  
 For man and beast such grateful shade 21870  
 Of close-grown leaves. This noble tree,  
 This olive, guards umbrageously  
 The fountain, and the beasts that roam  
 Around find there a friendly home  
 Of shady boughs, and pearly dews  
 Enjoy, which scatter and diffuse  
 The fount's bright waves amid the sweet  
 Soft grass and flowers around their feet.  
 Against the olive's well-grown bole  
 Is fixed, small writ, a parchment scroll, 21880  
 Which saith, to those who heedfully  
 Read as beneath its shade they lie :  
 ' Under this olive tree's firm root  
 The fount of life runs, and the fruit  
 Of sweet salvation bears the tree ; '  
 What pine of such great worth can be ?

The olive  
tree

The carbuncle      Within this fountain (though a lie  
 Fools call it, and some doubtfully  
 Withhold their judgment,) hangs a stone      21390  
 More glorious far to gaze upon  
 Than diamond; it carbuncle hight,  
 And radiates a flood of light;  
 Round is it, with three facets cut,  
 And in the fountain's midst 'tis put  
 So high that all about the park  
 Its burning rays dispel the dark,  
 With power so great that neither cloud,  
 Nor wind, nor storm, nor rain can  
                          shroud  
 Their splendour. As you gaze upon  
 The facets three, you see each one,      21400  
 As all its radiance bursts on you,  
 Is equal to the other two,  
 And in the selfsame manner are  
 The twain with that upon a par,  
 For such the virtue is of each  
 That neither one can overreach  
 Its fellow, but repeats again  
 Its perfect beauty o'er again.  
 None can by taking thought decide  
 What 'tis that ever doth divide      21410  
 That stone, yet trow I, ne'er it can  
 Divided be by any man.  
 The sun's strong light it needeth not,  
 For it within itself hath got  
 A brightness so resplendent that,  
 Though the meridian sun fell flat  
 Upon the crystal water pure,  
 Beside this stone 'twould look obscure.

What more thereof then needs to say? Perfect  
 No sunbeams, e'en at full noonday, 21420 day  
 Could equal that carbuncle's bright  
 And dazzling rays, which more delight  
 Give to men's eyes than e'er the sun  
 Through all the lapse of time hath done.  
 The night it doth to exile send,  
 For perfect day that knows no end  
 It makes, and as no fine in view  
 It hath, it ne'er beginning knew,  
 But keepeth ever on one line, 21430  
 Free of degree or zodiac sign;  
 It knows not midnight, nor the art  
 Which hours from minutes sets apart.  
 This jewel hath a power so great,  
 That whatso mortals, blessed by fate,  
 Behold it there suspended high,  
 Soon as they cast a downward eye  
 Upon the water, and therein  
 Behold themselves, forthwith shall win  
 A perfect view from side to side  
 Of all the park both far and wide, 21440  
 And whatsoever things may be  
 Contained within its boundary;  
 And soon as they enjoy that sight,  
 Bursts on their souls an inner light,  
 In suchwise that they nevermore  
 Shall be deceived as heretofore,  
 Whate'er the chance or case may be,  
 But o'er all wit have mastery.

Nay, further marvels shall you hear.  
 This sun-like gem the sight will cheer 21450

**Paradise** Of those who on its brilliance gaze,  
**excelled** But yet their vision nowise daze  
 Nor injure, for, in truth, so great  
 Its virtue, 'twill invigorate  
 The eyesight, giving new-born strength,  
 And vision of amazing length;  
 And that carbuncle is the seat,  
 Moreover, of soft gentle heat  
 And odour, which doth every glade  
 With fragrant incense-clouds invade. 21160  
 Hereof no more behoves to say,  
 But ever keep in mind, I pray :  
 That they who all the marvels know  
 Of this fair place, will straight avow  
 'That many a way doth it excel  
 'The paradise whence Adam fell.

For God's sake, lordlings, say amain,  
 What think ye of these gardens twain ?  
 In faith and loyalty declare  
 Which deem ye better and more fair, 21470  
 Bethinking well of their intents,  
 Their substances and accidents.  
 In turn regard each fount and see  
 Which waters must more healthful be,  
 More virtuous, precious, clear, and pure :  
 And to the conduits give mature  
 Considering ; of each precious stone  
 Judge, and say which the nobler one  
 Ye deem ; and unto which assign  
 Ye greater virtue, to the pine 21480  
 Or to the olive, at whose root  
 The fount flows, whence it bears such fruit.



<p>To your conclusion then I look          With confidence, if by the book          Ye judge, whence I have given to you          Lessons past price, wise, just, and true.          No false or flattering phrase I spend,          For high and low to me must bend          Alike; but should you practise wrong,          Speak falsely or withhold your tongue          From truth—'tis well that this ye learn—          My face I would towards others turn.          And in the hope that we the better          May find agreement, to the letter          Once more permit me to set forth          Of these two founts the differing worth:          'Through one do mortals drink in death,          The other gives the dead new breath.</p>	<p><b>Follow wise counsel</b></p> <p>21490</p>
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<p>Fair sirs, take ye my words for true,          Namely, that if with wisdom you          But set yourselves to live aright,          Your lips shall taste that fountain bright          And undefiled. And since 'twill fain          My heart to think that ye retain          My lessons (and good counsels sped          Briefly are best remembered),          I will to you, ere hence I go,          In fewest words the substance show          Of all my rede, and howso he          Should live who would a true man be.</p>	<p>21500</p> <p>21510</p>
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Honour ye Nature, be your aim  
 To do her work, unlet by blame,

**Full** But whatsoever haps, I trow,  
**reward** Ye should to Reason's counsels bow.  
 If goods of others ye possess,  
 Restore them of your gentleness,  
 And if thereto should be some bar,  
 Wait till in better case ye are,  
 'Then make return in kind or gold  
 In measure full, nay, manifold. 21520  
 'Mid strife or slaughter be not seen,  
 But hands and mouth alike keep clean ;  
 Be loyal, kind, and piteous,  
 And then shall you that marvellous  
 And beauteous park at last attain,  
 And golden chalices shall drain  
 At that sweet fountain pure and clear,  
 The while your footsteps follow near  
 Those of the Lamb, and ye shall be  
 His friends through all eternity. 21530  
 Grim death shall lose all claim on you  
 When once your lips that fountain's dew  
 Have quaffed, and thenceforth shall ye go  
 Chanting, attired in robes of snow,  
 Sweet canzonets and roundelays,  
 O'er grassy meads and flower-grown ways  
 While dancing 'neath the olive tree.  
 But what is this I pipe to ye ?  
 'Tis time I put my flute aside  
 Ere yet its tune hath too far tried 21540  
 Your patience, and right long it were  
 Should you at full my sermon hear.  
 I look to see your goodly throng  
 Mounting with sturdy limbs and strong  
 The embattled wall or deadly breach.

*The Author.*

Thus Genius spake and unto each  
 Gave life and resolution new,  
 And then amid the host he threw  
 A waxen torch with loose flax dighted  
 Whence all the world around was lighted ; 21550  
 And Venus thence the fire dispersed  
 Till all Eve's daughters it immersed ;  
 And soon the flames were driven so high  
 That every woman presently,  
 Alike in body, mind, and thought,  
 Was with the torch's incense fraught,  
 And Love erelong the message spread  
 All wide abroad that Genius sped,  
 Until its drift each baron knew,  
 And stout allegiance sware thereto.

Genius'  
 torch

21560

Greatly the warriors felt elated  
 When Genius thus his case had stated,  
 (For none, they said, ere this had heard  
 A message that so deeply stirred  
 Their hearts, nor had, since first conceived,  
 So fair a pardon e'er received ;  
 Nor ever since to manhood grown,  
 Anathema so just had known),  
 And cried to show their joy thereat :  
 Amen ! Amen ! Fiat ! Fiat !

21570

All matters thus appointed, they  
 Impatient grew—nor brooked delay.  
 Each one the sermon word for word  
 Within his heart's recesses stored,

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O

**The cry** For deemed they all that profit great  
**to arms** Would spring to them and their estate  
 From that full pardon therein sped.  
 Then straightway Genius vanishèd,  
 Nor knew they whither he was gone ;  
 But twenty sang, with voicing one : 21580  
 'To arms ! to arms then, hasten we  
 Who thus have heard our lord's decree,  
 Our foemen fear our dread assault.'  
 Then towards the walls they leap and vault  
 With right good will to carry on  
 The war till every tower is won.

## CV

'Then Venus, bending forward, stood  
 To catch the breeze within her hood,  
 And to the castle came, I wot,  
 Right quickly though she entered not. 21590

**V**ENUS, all ready for the fray,  
 Demandeth of the guards that they  
 Yield straight the fort—but quick reply  
 Make Shame and Fear right haughtily.

*Shame and Fear to Venus.*

Venus ! cried Fear, you lose your pains,  
 Herein your foot no entry gains.  
 Nay ! Shame cried, though I all alone  
 Stood guard, I'd yield no single stone.

*The Author.*

'Then, hearing Shame, the goddess spake :

*Venus.*

Vile trull! What! dare you then to make 21600 **Shame**  
 Resistance to my sovereign laws? **reproved**  
 Submit! or you shall have good cause  
 'To rue your folly, and all vain  
 Will find your efforts to retain  
 The fort, for by God's body I  
 Will storm the stronghold presently,  
 And on hot coals all quick will stretch  
 Both you and Fear—O caitiff wretch!  
 'The whole enclosure will I burn,  
 And towers and battlements o'turn; 21610  
 Before I'll scorch you and behind,  
 And walls and pillars to the wind  
 I'll scatter, and filled in shall be  
 Your moats with earthworks utterly;  
 And barbicans that you employ  
 To shoot through will I clean destroy,  
 However high they may be set.  
 Fair-Welcome, doubt you not, shall get  
 Roses and rosebuds, which shall drift  
 Into his hands by gold or gift; 21620  
 And fierce and furious though you be,  
 You shall in long procession see  
 The whole world pass where bud and rose  
 Bloom free, when I love's lists unclose.

And Jealousy to scorn and flout,  
 Lovers shall wander all about  
 The meadows fresh and gardens fair,  
 Unlet by Shame, or Fear, or Care,  
 O'er flower-grown paths, and at their ease  
 Gather such roses as they please; 21680

**Satan's** Whether they clerks or laics be  
**scourges** All shall alike bow down to me.  
 And little reck I if they are,  
 Or regular or secular,  
 All shall alike their penance make,  
 And willingly my shrifting take.  
 Some secretly their court shall pay,  
 Some openly, in eye of day,  
 But those who come in secret wise  
 Are far the nobler in mine eyes ; 21640  
 The others are but little worth,  
 Vile ribalds who disgrace God's earth.  
 And others are there who, I wot,  
 Earn censure, yet incur it not ;  
 For true it is that many a man  
 (God and the Holy Father ban  
 His ways and leave him in his  
 need)  
 Who scorns a rose, yet loves a weed.  
 But Satan, who such folk doth urge  
 To crime, with nettle rods shall scourge 21650  
 Their backs ; for Genius, by command  
 Of Nature, all this wretched band  
 Hath outlawed, and they ranged, ywis,  
 Shall be among our enemies.  
 Vile Shame, I will your body tear  
 Piecemeal, and scatter to the air  
 The fragments, or else hide my head,  
 For ne'er will I be let or led  
 By you, or Reason, your dull mother,  
 Who lovers hates and fain would smother, 21660  
 For those who listen to ye twain  
 Will of my service ne'er be fain.

*The Author.*

Then Venus deemed that might suffice  
Alike for threats and good advice,  
And scorned the matter to debate  
Further, as one exasperate :  
Her bow she seized and nocked to it  
A goodly shaft of measure fit,  
And drew with well-skilled arm and  
strong

## The Rose transformed

(The weapon was a fathom long) 21670  
The bowstring, till it touched her ear :  
Then loosing it, with whistle clear  
[The shaft across the enclosure flew,  
And with unerring aim cleft through  
The heart of the Rose.

**Ah ! how declare,**

When Venus' arrow pierced it there,  
What tumult rose of passions wild  
Within the bosom of that child  
Of nature. 'Through the magic power  
Of Venus, in that self-same hour,  
A wondrous miracle befell,  
The Rose became a damosel  
Of form and beauty past compare,  
Clothed in her own rich golden hair,  
Which somewhiles fell apart to show  
Skin whiter than the driven snow.  
So perfect was she in each part,  
'That vainly might the sculptor's art  
'To marble strive to give such grace  
As shone alike in limbs and face.  
For cold is marble as dread death,  
While this fair maid instinct with breath,

**Medusa's** And warm with ruby life-blood bright,  
**head** To touch was grateful as to sight.  
 And in her native beauty drest,  
 Like some sweet goddess stood confest ;  
 Then Courtesy with heart aflame  
 The Rose's tiring maid became,  
 And cast about her limbs a smock  
 Of finest lawn, the while a frock 21700  
 Of silken woof most rarely wrought  
 She drew around her. Pleasure sought  
 To make fit garland for her head  
 Of flowers with golden orfreys wed,  
 While quickly gentle Franchise dight  
 Her feet with sandals, jewel bright.

As in far days Medusa's head  
 Caused those who looked upon it dead  
 To fall like stone, so she as wife  
 Inspired the Lover with new life. 21710  
 Those fierce and tangled snake-wreathed locks  
 Turned, as we read, all men to rocks  
 Who rashly dared to gaze thereon,  
 Till Perseus, god-protected son  
 Of Jupiter and Danæe,  
 O'ercame her through the targe which he  
 Did of Minerva's gifting win,  
 And right good stead it stood him in ;  
 For ever in the deadly field  
 Of strife it caused his foe to yield 21720  
 Before him, turned to death-cold stone,  
 And fall beneath his winged feet prone.  
 But this fair may would rather make  
 Stones turn to men for her sweet sake,



And she not death would deal, but life ;	
Warring alone in Love's blest strife.	The
Then Venus, with good will to free	tower
This maiden from the bondage she	ablaze
Had with Fair-Welcome suffered, threw	
Over the heads of all the crew	21780
Around the tower, her blazing torch,	
Which on a distaff in the porch	
Fell flush, and set the place ablaze.	
The janitors with wild amaze	
Saw that the end approached, and cried	
One to another : Now defied	
Are we by Venus and betrayed,	
The Lover's cause she hers hath made,	
Let each one cast his keys away	
And save himself as best he may.	21740
Danger, that very spawn of hell,	
Soon as he caught the burning smell,	
Fled as a stag flies o'er the mead,	
And others, taking little heed	
Of how their fellows fared, made haste	
To run, their skirts tucked round the	
waist,	
As though they'd gone stark staring mad.	
Fear flew, and Shame, downcast and sad,	
Pressed on her heels, when all alight	
The castle saw they blazing bright,	21750
Counting those lessons less than nought	
Which Reason painfully had taught.	
But thither then sped Courtesy,	
(So noble, kind, and fair to see,)	
When she beheld this utter rout,	
With eager will to save thereout	

**Fair-  
Welcome  
delivered** Her son, Fair-Welcome, and with her  
 Came Pity and her fosterer,  
 Franchise, and through the raging fire  
 They rushed ere yet destruction dire 21760  
 Had seized the child of Courtesy,  
 Whom, when she saw in safety, she  
 Bespake in gentle fluting voice.

*Courtesy to Fair-Welcome.*

Now may my heart once more rejoice,  
 Fair son, which hath been rackt with fear  
 While that you lay imprisoned here.  
 God grant the gates of hell hold fast  
 The wretch who in vile dungeon cast  
 Your fair-formed limbs, O well-loved son,  
 But now full victory have we won, 21770  
 And buried in the foss-ditch lie  
 Evil-Tongue's bones, while Jealousy  
 Shall let you not, whate'er you do,  
 For she no more can come on you  
 By quick surprises, since that he  
 Who told her all hath ceased to be.  
 And for your other foes, all fled  
 Are they, with terror well-nigh dead,  
 Nor dare again within this place,  
 Where blooms the Rose, to show their face. 21780

Fair son, you now, by Venus' power,  
 Are snatched from out the burning tower,  
 And I, Franchise and Pity, pray  
 That you consent without delay  
 To let this faithful lover dress  
 His heart in that pure happiness

For which he so hath yearned and longed,  
While many a way hath he been wronged  
By Evil-Tongue and Fear and Shame  
And Jealousy, accursed beldame, 21790  
And Danger, who hath lastly found  
His strength but vain against profound  
And faithful love. His very soul  
He offers now, and free from toll  
Or tax, I pray you let him come  
To make in this fair spot his home,  
With her who is no more a flower,  
But hath become, through Venus' power,  
A beauteous maiden.

Love the  
conqueror

Love it is  
'That all things conquereth, and this 21800  
Hath Virgil told us in that fine  
And ever memorable line,  
Which runneth : 'Omnia vincit Amor,'  
And we to him must bow therefore.  
O'er all is LOVE supreme, and we  
Are bound his servitors to be.  
What Virgil saith of that great word  
Is true, for it through time hath stirred  
Men's spirits, till they have defied  
The world for it, and lightly died. 21810  
Fair son, I now beseech thee, give  
Consent that with the Rose may live  
This Lover till their hands death part.

*Fair-Welcome.*

Fair-Welcome cried : With ready heart  
I give to him his full desire,  
And pray him to forget the dire

The Vexations that his path beset,  
 Lover Ere he might full possession get  
 wins Of that which shall henceforward be  
 The crown of his felicity.

21820

*The Lover.*

What more remaineth then to say,  
 Saving that thus I gained the day  
 By Venus' aid, and now at last,  
 My pains and perils safely past,  
 To all and each who helped me I  
 Shall worship give unendingly?  
 For 'tis through them that I am rich  
 Beyond the highest treasure which  
 Men most desire; and praise is due  
 To Cupid and his mother, who  
 Gave aid and comfort in my woe,  
 And to the barons who each foe  
 O'erthrew and conquered (may God speed  
 To all true lovers in their need  
 Such help), and therefore to all those  
 I worship give by whom the Rose  
 Came to my arms. But little cause  
 I have to render, for her saws,  
 Dame Reason thanks, and Riches hath  
 Small claim to laud, for she the path  
 Of love against me strongly barred,  
 Keeping the gate with watch and ward:  
 But now complete my triumph is  
 O'er all my bitter enemies.

21830

21840

'Then ere from out that garden close  
 I issued with my hard-won Rose,

# THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE 211

I fain a chaplet fair would make  
To deck her head ; and—thus did wake.]

Love's  
promise  
kept

The God of Love, and eke my friend,  
Their promise gave that in the end, 21850  
If I but served Love loyally,  
My heart's desire fulfilled should be.  
And now 'tis clear that he a fool  
Must be accounted who Love's rule  
Despises, or dares hold in scorn  
Sweet visions of the night-tide born,  
For this fair dream I certify  
To be no mockery or lie,  
But all herein set down forsooth,  
Pure gold refined, and spotless truth. 21860

Here the Romance that hight the Rose  
Hath end—Love's art its leaves enclose—  
Dame Nature smiles—for so 'twould seem  
Are *hic et hanc* conjoined in dream.

## APPENDIX

WITH a view to justify the plan adopted of giving a summary conclusion to the story in place of following the author's text to the end, the original is here printed of the lines which the translator of the rest has forborne to put into English.

He believes that those who read them will allow that he is justified in leaving them in the obscurity of the original.

The lines are numbered according to the original text (Orleans ed. 1878), from where the translation breaks off.

### *L'Acteur.*

Venus à plus dire n'entent,	21505
Que bien li sofisoit atant.	
Lors s'est Venus haut secorcie,	
Bien sembla fame corrocie,	
L'arc tent, et le boujon encoche :	
lèt quant el l'ot bien mise en coche,	21510
Jusqu'à l'oreille l'arc entoise	
Qui n'iert pas plus lons d'une toise ;	
Puis avise cum bonne archiere,	
Par une petitete archiere	
Qu'ele vit en la tor reposte	
Par devant, non pas par encoste,	
Que Nature ot par grant maistrise	
Entre deux pilerés assise.	

Cil dui pilers d'ivire estoient,  
 Moult gent, et d'argent sostenoient 21520  
 Une ymagete en leu de chasse,  
 Qui n'iert trop haute ne trop basse,  
 Trop grosse, trop gresle non pas,  
 Mès toute taillie à compas,  
 De bras, d'espaules et de mains,  
 Qu'il n'i failloit ne plus ne mains.  
 Moult icrent gent li autre membre,  
 Et plus olans que pomme d'embre :  
 Dedens avoit ung saintuaire  
 Covert d'ung précieux suaire, 21580  
 Li plus gentil et li plus noble  
 Qui fust jusqu'en Constantinoble,  
 T'el ymage n'ot nus en tor.  
 Plus avienent miracle entor  
 Qu'ains n'avint entor Medusa ;  
 Mès ceste trop meillor us a.  
 Vers Medusa riens ne duroit,  
 Car en roche transfiguroit  
 ('Tant faisoit felonnesses euvres  
 Par ses felons crins de coleuvres,) 21640  
 Trestuit cil qui la regardoient.  
 Par nul engin ne s'en gardoient,  
 Fors Perséus, li filz Jovis,  
 Qui par l'escu la vit où vis  
 Que sa suer Pallas li livra.  
 Par cel escu se delivra,  
 Par l'escu le chief li toli, .  
 Si l'emporta tous jors o li.  
 Moult le tint chier, moult s'i fiot,  
 En maint estour mestier li ot ; 21550

Ses fors anemis en muoit,  
 Les autres à glaive tuoit.  
 Mès ne la vit que par l'escu,  
 Car il n'eüst ja puis vescu.  
 Ses escus li ert miroers,  
 Car tiex ert où chief li poers,  
 S'il la regardast face à face,  
 Roche devenist en la place.  
 Mès l'ymage dont ci vous conte,  
 Les vertus Medusa sormonte, 21560  
 Qu'el ne sert pas de gens tuer,  
 Ne d'eus faire en roche muer :  
 Ceste de roche les remue,  
 En lor forme les continue,  
 Voire en meillor c'onques ne furent,  
 Ne c'onques mès avoir ne purent.  
 Cele nuist, et ceste profite,  
 Cele occist, ceste resuscite,  
 Cele les eslevés moult griève  
 Et ceste les grevés relieve : 21570  
 Car qui de ceste s'aprochast,  
 Et tout véist, et tout tochast,  
 S'il fust ains en roche mué,  
 Ou de son droit sens remué,  
 Ja puis roche ne le tenist,  
 En son droit sens s'en revenist ;  
 Si fust-il à tous jors garis  
 De tous maus et de tous peris.

Si m'aist Diex, se ge poissee,  
 Volentiers plus près la véisse ; 21580  
 Voire, par Diex, par tout tochasse,  
 Se de si près en aprochasse ;



Mès ele est digne et vertueuse,  
 Tant est de biauté precieuse.  
 Et se nus usant de raison  
 Voloit faire comparaison  
 D'ymage à autre bien portraite,  
 Autel en puet faire be ceste  
 A l'ymage Pymalion,  
 Comme de souris à lion.

Story of  
 Pygma-  
 lion

21590

## CVI

The story of Pygmalion here  
 Is told, and of his image dear.

**P**YGMALION hight a sculptor good,  
 Who equally stone, wax or wood,  
 Or metal wrought, but chiefly he  
 Loved carving fair white ivory ;  
 And one day with desire he might  
 His skill display, (for never wight  
 Hath since his day such cunning shown  
 Of hand, nor to such honour grown,) 21600  
 He set himself to counterfeit,  
 In ivory white, a maiden sweet.  
 Nor, thereon working, did he fail  
 To carve with care each least detail,  
 Until 'twould seem as though his knife  
 Gave to the ivory image life,  
 With power almost to breathe and move,  
 And thus the sculptor's art approve.

Both Helen, and Lavinia were,  
 Though famed for beauty, far less fair 21610

An un-  
known  
passion

Than she, for form of limbs and face,  
And gentle and surpassing grace,  
By nine good tenths. Pygmalion stood  
Entranced by her sweet womanhood  
So throughly that he noticed not  
How strait the God of Love had got  
His toils around him. Bitterly  
He plained his lot, yet nought knew he  
To cure his grief. He cried: Alas!  
Doth some strange sorcery o'er me pass? 21620  
Full many an image I ere this  
Have sculptured, whereof none, ywis,  
Could sum the worth, yet ne'er before  
Did one awaken love's sweet sore  
Within mine heart; but now fond rage  
And passion all my soul engage  
In tireless conflict. Whence can rise  
These strifes that thus my soul surprise?  
I love a statue! deaf and mute!  
From out whose lips no gentle bruit 21630  
Of speech can come, nor burns the fire  
Of love to answer my desire  
Within its breast. Whence can this love  
Have birth, my spirit thus to move?  
Of love so strange no man e'er spake  
Or dreamed—it sets my heart aquake.  
Am I more mad than all my race?  
How then to act in suchlike case?

If I, pardee, on some great queen  
Had set my love, there then had been 21640  
A hope she might return again  
My passion, of my genius fain;

Is it mad-  
ness?

But suchlike criminal desire  
As this could Nature ne'er inspire.  
I can but be her base-born child  
To give me to a love so wild.  
Therefore I dare not lay the blame  
On her, and say she lit the flame.  
Should I then blame some other one?  
Nay! since I hight Pygmalion, 21650  
And learned upon two feet to range  
The earth, ne'er knew I love so strange.  
But do I love so follily?  
For if old histories do not lie,  
Full many a man wild love hath known.  
Did not Narcissus cast him down  
Beside a fount, his thirst to slake,  
And weep himself to death for sake  
Of his own visage seen therein?  
O folly unto madness kin! 21660  
For which he found nor help or cure,  
But lost himself within the pure  
Pellucid wave—in history writ  
Is this, nor need we doubt of it.  
'Fore heaven, I'm not so mad as this,  
For I, when so I will, may kiss,  
Fondle, and touch my image dear,  
And therein find at least sweet cheer  
And consolation, while that he  
Could in the fount himself but see. 21670  
And otherwhiles it oft hath been  
'That love-lorn men fair dames have seen  
And served them well, yet ne'er could  
gain  
One smile or kiss to salve their pain.

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P

**Passion** But love to me is less unkind,  
**unre-** Since I some consolation find—  
**turned** But, no! herein I greatly err,  
 For in their breasts at least might stir  
 Fond hope to win a loving kiss,  
 Or other sweet and tender bliss ; 21680  
 But unto me the door is shut  
 Faster than kernel in a nut,  
 For when I would with amorous play  
 Approach my sweetling—well-a-day!  
 I find her senseless as a block  
 Of ebon wood, or sea-beat rock ;  
 And eke so cold that frost-bite nips  
 My mouth whenc'er I kiss her lips.  
 Ah! pardon, dearest friend, I pray,  
 'The rude, harsh words I've dared to say. 21690  
 Take vengeance on me if you will,  
 But, oh! what joy supreme would fill  
 My heart if you should gently deign  
 To smile; swift then would die my pain:  
 Sweet looks sad lovers' wrongs redress,  
 And brim their souls with happiness.

## CVII

Pygmalion earnestly demands  
 His pardon with uplifted hands  
 Towards the image, begging she  
 Will of his plaints forgetful be. 21700

**T**HEN on his knees Pygmalion fell,  
 'The while his eyes became a well  
 Of earnest tears, and vows he spends,  
 But thereto nought his love attends—

She neither sees his gestic nor hears  
 His plaintive sighs, nor notes his tears,  
 So that, alack ! his pains doth he  
 Expend and waste all uselessly,  
 Yet would not willingly again  
 Recall that love he gave amain. 21710  
 He now by Cupid's power is left  
 Of wit and reason so bereft,  
 That scarce he knows if she be dead  
 Or living. Then from foot to head  
 His fingers wander, and her breasts  
 Seem soft and supple as he tests  
 Them gently, but the suppleness  
 His hand affordeth. Deep distress  
 Then strikes Pygmalion, rest or peace  
 His spirit knows not—without cease 21720  
 He loves, he hates, he laughs, he cries,  
 Smiles wreath his face, tears blind his  
     eyes  
 In turn. Then next his hands array  
 The ivory limbs with vestments gay  
 Of finest webs and costliest silk,  
 This scarlet, that more white than milk,  
 This emerald, that of Tyrian hue,  
 This tinged with over-sea's deep blue,  
 That bordered round with precious fur  
 Of ermine, grise, or miniver. 21780  
 Now he removes, and now in haste  
 Restores, to suit his varying taste,  
 Each robe in turn ; now silk he deems  
 Most comely, and now satin seems  
 The daintier ; or fine sendal weft,  
 Or velvet rich, he draws with deft

The And loving fingers round her ; dyes  
 statue Brown, vermeil, blue, and green he tries,  
 attired With fringings bright of precious gold.  
 Each seemed an angel to enfold, 21740  
 As all unmoved she silent stood,  
 A type of perfect maidenhood.  
 And then he crowns her with a wimple,  
 Surmounted by a veiling simple  
 Of finest tissue, which her head  
 Adorns, but leaves uncoverèd  
 Her face, in despite of the mode  
 Of Saracens, whose heathen code  
 Instructs to hide 'neath tamise cloth  
 A woman's face (e'en though she loth 21750  
 May be thereto) when by the way  
 She passes in the light of day,  
 So doth their heathen hearts engage  
 Foul jealousy's insensate rage.  
 And then anon with fickle mind,  
 The robes off-stript, he loves to bind  
 Her delicate limbs with ribands fair  
 (Varied of hues as tint the air  
 When rainbows rise), and glistening  
 strings  
 Of brilliant pearls and decorings 21760  
 Of sparkling gems. And then above  
 Her coifing, with the hand of love  
 A brooch he clasps, the while to hold  
 Her veil in place, a crown of gold  
 He sets thereon, of fretwork dight  
 And decked with diamonds, wells of light,  
 And necklaces surpassing fair,  
 Of jewels, angled, round, and square,

Gems and  
flowers

And many a gem of lesser price  
 Which yet might raise men's avarice. 21770  
 And next, her shell-like ears he tires  
 With precious stones on golden wires,  
 While to hold close the coif, which gapes  
 Apart, he two gold brooches shapes,  
 And rarest jewels hangs between  
 Her virgin breasts' sweet ivory sheen.  
 Then round her girdlestead he ties  
 A cincture which for fairness vies  
 With that which erst Queen Venus bore,  
 Whence hangs a dainty purse with store 21780  
 Of gold bedight, and therein set  
 Five stones are, such as divers get  
 From out the sea-depths, wherewith play  
 Young maids when fain to while the day.  
 Then next, with gentle care, her two  
 Small mignon feet with hose and shoe  
 He tires, most deftly carved and so  
 Designed that safely may she go  
 Two inches out the mire. No boots  
 Were hers of suchlike sort as suits 21790  
 Parisian dames, too delicate  
 Her feet for gear so cramped and strait.  
 Then with a golden bodkin he  
 Braideth her armsleeves cunningly  
 With glistening thread. Then flowers he  
 brings,  
 The gentle springtide's fosterlings  
 (Wherewith young maidens bind their hair  
 And love to fashion garlands fair  
 With fingers deft), and these did he  
 Enweave and handle skilfully 21800

**Music's charms** In posies, knots, and strange shaped birds,  
 Varied beyond the power of words  
 By practice of his subtlest art.  
 And for the treasure of his heart  
 A ring he fashioned, and thus spake :  
 Dear maid, the love that you awake  
 I pray you to bestow again,  
 For thereof is my wrackt heart fain.  
 If Hymen, with the Queen of Love  
 Conjoined, should hear me from above 21810  
 'The skies, and deign to grace the feast  
 Of our troth-plighting, neither priest  
 Nor mitred prelate shall we need,  
 Those gods espousals best may speed.

Then, voice uplift, did he express  
 In song his joyful-heartedness,  
 And, in the place of masses, sang  
 Soft love-songs, till the echoes rang,  
 And made his instruments resound  
 As though the gods on earth were found, 21820  
 For in a hundred manners he  
 Struck the loud chords more merrily  
 Than did Amphion in old days  
 The walls of mighty Thebes to raise.  
 Sweet zitherns, harps, and lutes he played  
 In concert, and soft music made  
 E'en as it pleased him. Then of clocks  
 The tongues he skilfully unlocks,  
 With subtle wheels arranged that so  
 They may in halls and chambers go 21830  
 With tireless motion. Organs he  
 Wrought out and schemed so skilfully,



Response  
lacks

And in such subtle fashion planned  
That whoso bore them, with one hand  
Both wind and music might produce,  
And with sonorous voice give loose  
To tenor or sweet treble notes  
Of rhymed motets. And tuneful rotes  
And cymbals made he speak, and shalms  
Which more of love-songs knew than  
psalms,

21840

And tambourine and flute and bell  
Spake tunefully with fall and swell,  
And psaltery and viol he  
Discourse drew from entrancingly ;  
And lastly roused a merry wail  
From bagpipes, hight of Cornouaille ;  
Then seizes he her little hand  
As fain he'd dance a saraband ;  
But like an arrow through his heart  
It strikes to find she takes no part  
Nor joys therein, nor kens to sing  
Response to his sweet musicking.  
But still his arms he interlaces  
Around her form in fond embraces,  
Then, lain upon the couch, with kiss  
And touch he striveth amorous bliss  
To wake within her limbs, ah vain !  
Her lips no kisses give again.  
With doting fondness well-nigh dead,  
Yet still unto his folly wed,  
Pygmalion, most unfortunate  
Of lovers, battles yet with fate.  
He now this image deaf and blind  
Bedecks in restlessness of mind,

21850

21860

A feast of And now her lovely limbs all nude  
 Venus Regards in fixed beatitude.

Then happed it that the countryside  
 A festival would fain provide  
 Where many wonders came about.  
 'To Venus' temple swarmed a rout 21870  
 Of lovers, and Pygmalion came,  
 'Mong others, to avow his flame,  
 And with a piteous voice laments  
 The passion that his soul torments  
 Before the gods, for whom had he  
 Carved many an image skilfully,  
 Yet ever had he held him chaste,  
 Nor deigned Queen Venus' joys to taste.

*Pygmalion.*

Fair Gods, he cried, whom all men  
 fear,  
 I pray you my sad plaint to hear. 21880  
 And thou, great goddess of this fane,  
 Saint Venus, hear my prayer amain,  
 'Though I perchance have angered thee  
 In worshipping fair chastity;  
 But now with heart abased I must  
 Own thy hot wrath for right and just,  
 And bitterly, foregone delay,  
 Repent me, and thy pardon pray,  
 Imploring thy sweet grace to give  
 To me my love that I may live 21890  
 With her as wife who seems to be  
 Now but insensate ivory,

Fulfilling her with warmth and fire  
 Of love to answer my desire ;  
 Do this, blest goddess, with quick haste,  
 And if I longer hold me chaste,  
 Command that I be straightway hung,  
 Or cut in pieces and be flung  
 To Cerberus, hound fierce and fell,  
 Who guards and keeps the gates of hell.

Venus  
 gives aid

21900

*The Author.*

With kindly heart the goddess heard  
 Her suppliant's repentant word  
 And faithful promise to forego  
 The chastity which grieves her so,  
 Within the arms of her whom he  
 Loved and adored so ardently.  
 And with desire to ease his pain  
 And let him see that not in vain  
 He sought her aid, she filled with life  
 The image, and no fairer wife  
 Or maiden e'er hath lived, I ween,  
 Since Eve by Adam first was seen.

21910

No longer in the fane delayed  
 His steps Pygmalion, when once made  
 Had he his prayer, for yet again  
 Of sight and touch his heart was fain.  
 Nought of the miracle he knew,  
 Yet humbly rendered reverence due  
 To God—but when he cast a look  
 On her he loved, his being shook

21920

**The statue wakes** Within him, and his spirit burned  
 With eager hope, for as he turned  
 Him towards her, there a maiden stood  
 Incarnate, living flesh and blood,  
 While all around her body fair  
 Fell wavelets rich of golden hair.  
 His hand with doubtful daring steals  
 Around her limbs, her pulse he feels,  
 And finds quick movement! Can it be  
 God's truth, or some foul jugglery? 21930  
 He falls aback, almost afraid  
 Lest he the victim hath been made  
 Of deep deception. Then he cries :

*Pygmalion.*

What is it? May I trust mine eyes?  
 Wake I, or sleep? Do I then dream?  
 Nay! all my senses quick I deem!  
 No vision e'er was like to this!  
 Whence comes such change, if change it is?  
 Or doth some evil phantom dare  
 Keep revel in that body fair? 21940

*The Author.*

Then spake amain that new-born may,  
 More lovely she than dawn of day,  
 Embosomed in rich tresses blond :

*The Image to Pygmalion.*

No evil phantom, but a fond

And loving maid am I, who fain  
 Would love you and be loved again ;  
 My proffer of fond love receive,  
 And let our souls as one inweave.

**Desire  
 fulfilled**

*The Author.*

When sees Pygmalion that this thing  
 Is true, past doubt or questioning, 21950  
 He comes anear as fain would he  
 More certain make sweet certainty,  
 And vows amain with right good-will,  
 'That lovingly will he fulfil  
 All she desires, and speaking thus  
 'They interlace in amorous  
 And fond embraces. E'en as doves  
 In cooing murmurs tell their loves,  
 So they in words all unexpressed  
 The praises of the gods confessed, 21960  
 And specially to Venus made  
 'Their vows for her all-powerful aid,  
 Assured her power alone could make  
 Cold ivory to warm love awake.

Or est Pymalions aaise,  
 Or n'est-il riens qui li desplaie,  
 Car riens qu'il voit el ne refuse ;  
 S'il opose, el se rent concluse ;  
 S'ele commande, il obeist,  
 Por riens ne la contredéist 21970  
 D'acomplir-li tout son desir.  
 Or puet o s'amie gesir,  
 Qu'el n'en fait ne dangier ne plainte.  
 Tant ont joé, qu'ele est ençainte

De Paphus, dont dit renommée  
 Que l'isle en fu Paphos nomée,  
 Dont li rois Cyniras nasqui.  
 Prodons fu, fors en ung cas, qui  
 Tous bons éurs éust éus,  
 S'il n'éust été décéus, 21950  
 Par Mirra sa fille la blonde :  
 Que la Vielle (que Diex confonde!)  
 Qui de pechié doutance n'a,  
 Par nuit en son lit li mena.  
 La roïne ert à une feste,  
 La pucele se mit en heste  
 Lez li rois, sans que mot séust  
 Qu'o sa fille gesir déust.  
 Ci ot trop estrange semille,  
 Li rois let gesir o sa fille ; 21990  
 Quant les ot ensemble aïnés,  
 Li biaux Adonis en fu nés,  
 Puis fu-ele en arbre muée  
 Car ses peres l'éust tuée,  
 Quant il aparçut le tripot.  
 Mais onques avenir n'i pot,  
 Quant ot fait apporter le cierge ;  
 Car cele, qui n'ere mès vierge,  
 Eschapa par isnele fuite,  
 Qu'il l'éust autrement destruite. 22000  
 Mais c'est trop loing de ma matire,  
 Por ce est bien drois qu'arriers m'en tire :  
 Bien orrés que ce signifie  
 Ains que cest euvre soit fenie.

Ne vous voil or ci plus tenir,  
 A mon propos m'estuet venir,

Qu'autre champ me convient arer.  
Qui voldroit donques comparer  
De ces deus ymages ensemble  
Les biautés, si cum il me semble, 22010  
Tel similitude i puet prendre,  
Qu'autant cum la soris est mendre  
Que li lions, et mains cremuë  
De cors, de force, et de valuë,  
Autant, sachiés, en loiauté,  
Ot cele ymage mains biauté  
Que n'a cele que tant ci pris.  
Bien avisa dame Cypris  
Cele ymage que ge devise  
Entre deus pilerez assise, 22020  
Ens en la tor droit où mileu :  
Onques encores ne vi leu  
Que si volentiers regardasse,  
Voire agenouillons l'aorasse ;  
Et le saintuaire et l'archiere  
Jà ne lessasse por l'archiere,  
Ne por l'arc, ne por le brandon,  
Que ge n'i entrasse à bandon.  
Mon pooir au mains en scïsse,  
A quelque chief que g'en venisse, 22030  
Se trovasse qui le m'offrist,  
Ou sans plus qui le me soffrist.  
Si m'i sui-ge par Diex voës  
As reliques que vous oës,  
Ou, se Diex plaist, ges requerrai,  
Si-tost cum tens et leu verrai,  
D'escherpe et de bordon garnis.  
Que Diex me gart d'estre escharnis

Et destorbés par nule chose,  
Que ne joïsse de la Rose !

22010

Venus n'i va plus atendant ;  
Le brandon plain de feu ardent  
Pout empené lesse voler  
Por ceus du chastel afoler ;  
Mais sachiés qu'ains nule ne nus,  
Tant le trait sotilment Venus,  
Ne l'orent pooir de choisir,  
Tant i gardassent par loisir.

## CVIII

Comment ceulx du chastel yssirent  
Hors, aussi-tost comme ilz sentirent  
La chaleur du brandon Venus,  
Dont aucuns jousterent tous nudz.

22050

QUANT li brandons s'en fu volés,  
Es-vos ceus dedens afolés,  
Li feus porprent tout le porpris ;  
Bien se durent tenir por pris.  
N'est nus qui le feu rescossist,  
Et bien rescorre le vossist.  
Tuit s'escrient : Trahi ! trahi !  
Tuit sommes morts ! ahi ! ahi !  
Foïr nous estuet du païs ;  
Chacuns giete ses clefz laïs.  
Dangiers, li orribles maufés,  
Quant il se senti eschaufés,

22060



S'enfuit plus tost que cerf en lande.  
 N'i a nul d'aus qui l'autre atende :  
 Chascuns les pans à la ceinture  
 Met a foïr toute sa cure.  
 Fuit-s'en Paor, Honte s'eslesse,  
 Tout embrasé le chastel lesse, 22070  
 N'onc puis ne volt riens metre à pris,  
 Que Raison li éust apris.  
 Estes-vous venir Cortoisie  
 La preus, la bele, la proisie ;  
 Quant el vit la desconfiture.  
 Por son filz geter de l'ardure,  
 Avec li Pitié et Franchise  
 Saillirent dedens la porprise,  
 N'onc por l'ardure ne lessierent,  
 Jusqu'à Bel-Acueil ne cessierent. 22080

Cortoisie prent la parole,  
 Premier à Bel-Acueil parole,  
 Car de bien dire n'ert pas lente :

*Courtoisie à Bel-Acueil.*

Biau fiz, moult ai esté dolente,  
 Moult ai au cuer tristece eüe  
 Dont tant avés prison tenuë.  
 Mal-feus et male-flambe l'arde,  
 Qui vous avoit mis en tel garde !  
 Or estes, Dieu merci, délivres,  
 Car là fors, o ses Normans yvres, 22090  
 En ces fossés est mors gisans  
 Male-Bouche li mesdisans ;

Véoir ne puet ne escouter.  
 Jalousie n'estuet douter ;  
 L'en ne doit pas por Jalousie  
 Lessier à mener bonne vie,  
 N'à solacier méismement  
 O son ami privéement,  
 Quant à ce vient qu'el n'a pooir  
 De la chose oïr, ne véoir :  
 N'il n'est qui dire la li puisse,  
 N'el n'a pooir que ci vous truisse.  
 Et li autre desconseillié  
 Foïs s'en sunt tuit essillié,  
 Li felon, li outrecuidié  
 Trestous ont le porpris vuidié.

22100

Biau très-douz filz, por Diex merci,  
 Ne vous lessiés pas brusler ci :  
 Nous vous prions par amitié,  
 Et ge, et Franchise, et Pitié,  
 Que vous à ce loial Amant  
 Ôtroiés ce qu'il vous demant,  
 Qui por vous a lonc tens mal trait,  
 N'onques ne vous fist ung faus trait.  
 Li frans qui onques ne guila,  
 Recevés le et quanqu'il a ;  
 Voire l'ame neis vous offre :  
 Por Diex, ne refusés tel offre,  
 Biau dous filz, ains le recevés,  
 Par la foi que vous me devés,  
 Et par Amors qui s'en efforce,  
 Qui moult i a mise grant force.  
 Biau filz, Amors vainc toutes choses,  
 Toutes sunt souz sa clef encloses.

22110

22120

Virgile néis le conferme  
Par sentence esprovée et ferme,  
Quant Bucoliques cercherés,  
Amors vaine tout, i troverés  
Et nous la devons recevoir.  
Certes il dist bien de ce voir ; 22130  
En ung sol vers tout ce nous conte,  
Ne péüst conter meillor conte.  
Biau filz, secorez cel Amant,  
Que Diex ambedeus vous amant,  
Ottoirs-li la Rose en don.

*Bel-Acueil.*

Dame, ge la li abandon,  
Fet Bel-Acueil, moult volentiers,  
Coillir la puet endementiers  
Que nous ne sommes ci que dui,  
Pieçà que recevoir le dui : 22140  
Car bien voi qu'il aime sans guile.

*L'Amant.*

Ge qui l'en rens mercis cent mile,  
Tantost comme bons pelerins,  
Hatis, fervens et enterins  
De cuer, comme fins amoureux,  
Après cest otroi saveours,  
Vers l'archiere acueil mon voiage  
Por fornir mon pelerinage ;  
Et port o moi par grant effort  
Escherpe et bordon grant et fort, 22150  
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Tel qu'il n'a mestier de ferrer  
 Por jornoier, ne por errer.  
 L'escherpe est de bonne seture,  
 D'une pel souple sans cousture ;  
 Mès sachiés qu'ele n'est pas vuide :  
 Deus martelez par grant estuide  
 Que mis i ot, si cum moi semble,  
 Diligemment tretout ensemble  
 Nature, qui la me bailla,  
 Dès lors que premiers la tailla, 22160  
 Sotilment forgiés li avoit,  
 Cum cele qui forgier savoit  
 Miex c'onques Dedalus ne sot.  
 Si croi que por ce fait les ot,  
 Qu'el pensoit que g'en ferreroie  
 Mes palefrois quant g'erreroie.  
 Si ferai-ge certainement,  
 Se g'en puis avoir l'aisement ;  
 Car, Diex merci, bien forgier sai.  
 Si vous di bien que plus chier ai 22170  
 Mes deus martelez et m'escherpe  
 Que ma citole ne ma herpe.  
 Moult me fist grant honor Nature,  
 Quant m'arma de tel arméure,  
 Et m'en enseigna si l'usage,  
 Qu'el m'en fist bon ovrier et sage :  
 Ele-mêmes le bordon  
 M'avoit appareillié por don,  
 Et volt au doler la main metre,  
 Ains que je fusse mis à letre. 22180  
 Mès du ferrer ne li chalut,  
 N'onques por ce mains n'en valut ;

Et puis que ge l'oi recéu,  
Pres de moi l'ai tous jors éu,  
Si que nel' perdi onques puis,  
Ne nel' perdrai jà se ge puis :  
Car n'en voldroie estre délivres  
Por cinq cens fois cent mile livres.  
Biau don me fist, por ce le gart ;  
Et moult sui liés quant le regart, 22190  
Et la merci de son présent  
Liés et jolis, quant ge le sent.  
Maintes fois m'a puis conforté  
En mainz leus ou ge l'ai porté ;  
Bien me sert, et savés de quoi,  
Quant sui en aucun leu requoi,  
Et ge chemine, ge le boute  
Es fosses où ge ne vois goute,  
Ausinc cum por les guez tenter ;  
Si que ge me puis bien venter 22200  
Que n'i ai garde de naier,  
Tant sai bien les gués essuier,  
Lît fier par rives et par fons :  
Mès g'en retruis de si parfons,  
Lît qui tant ont larges les rives,  
Qu'il me greveroit mains deus lîves  
Sor la marine esbanoier,  
Et le rivage costoyer ;  
Et mains m'i porroie lasser,  
Que si perilleus gué passer. 22210  
Car trop grans les ai essayés,  
Lît si n'i sui-ge pas naïés :  
Car si-tost cum ge les tentoie  
Et d'entrer ens m'entremetoie,

Et tex les avoie esprovés,  
 Que jamés fons n'i fust trovés  
 Par perche, ne par aviron,  
 Ge m'en aloie à l'environ,  
 Et près des rives me tenoie,  
 Tant que hors en la fin venoie : 22220  
 Mès jamais issir n'en péusse,  
 Se les arméures n'éusse  
 Que Nature m'avoit données.

Mès or lessons ces voies lées  
 A ceus qui là vont volentiers ;  
 Et nous les deduisans sentiers,  
 Non pas les chemins as charretes,  
 Mès les jolives senteletes,  
 Joli et renvoisié tenons,  
 Qui les jolivetés menons. 22230  
 Si rest plus de gaaing-rentiers  
 Viez chemins que noviaus sentiers,  
 Et plus i trueve-l'en d'avoir  
 Dont l'en puet grand profit avoir.  
 Juvenaues méismes aliche  
 Que qui se met en vielle riche,  
 S'il vuet à grant estat venir,  
 Ne puet plus bref chemin tenir ;  
 S'el prent son service de gré,  
 Tantost le boute en haut degré. 22240  
 Ovides méismes aferme  
 Par sentence esprovée et ferme,  
 Que qui se vuet à vielle prendre,  
 Moult en puet grant loier atendre ;  
 Tantost est grant richece aqoise  
 Por mener tel marchéandise.

Mès bien se gart qui vielle prie,  
Qu'il ne face riens, ne ne die  
Qui ja puist aguet ressembler,  
Quant il li vuet s'amor embler, 22250  
Ou loiaument néis aquerie,  
Quant amors en ses laz l'enserre :  
Car les dures vielles chenuës,  
Qui de jonesce sunt venuës  
Où jadis ont esté flatées,  
Et surprises et baratées  
Quant plus ont esté déceûës,  
Plus-tost se sunt aparcéûës  
Des barateresses faveles, 22260  
Que ne font les tendres puceles  
Qui des aguez pas ne se doutent,  
Quant les fléutéors escoutent ;  
Ains croient que barat et guile  
Soit ausinc voir cum Evangile :  
Car onc n'en furent eschaudées.  
Mès les dures vielles ridées,  
Malicieuses et recuites,  
Sunt en l'art de barat si duites,  
Dont eus ont toute la science  
Par tens et par expérience, 22270  
Que quant les flajoléors viennent,  
Qui par faveles les détiennent,  
Et as oreilles lor taborent,  
Quant de lor grace avoir laborent,  
Et soplient et s'umilient,  
Joignent lor mains et merci crient,  
Et s'enclinent et s'agenoillent,  
Et plorent si que tuit se moillent,

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Et devant eus se crucifient  
 Por ce que plus en eus se sient, 22280  
 Et lor prometent par faintise  
 Cuer et cors, avoir et servise,  
 Et lor fiancent et lor jurent  
 Les sains qui sunt, seront et furent,  
 Et les vont ainsinc decevant  
 Par parole où il n'a que vent :  
 Ainsinc cum fait li oiselierres  
 Qui tent à l'oiseil, comme lierres,  
 Et l'apele par dous sonnés,  
 Muciés entre les buissonnés, 22290  
 Por li faire à son brai venir,  
 Tant que pris le puisse tenir ;  
 Li fox oisiaus de li s'apprime,  
 Qui ne set respondre au sophime  
 Qui l'a mis en décepcion  
 Par figure de diccion ;  
 Si cum fait li cailliers la caille,  
 Por ce que dedans la rois saille ;  
 Et la caille le son escoute,  
 Si s'en apresse, et puis se boute 22300  
 Sous la rois que cil a tenduë  
 Sor l'erbe en printens fresche et druë ;  
 Se n'est aucune caille vielle,  
 Qui venir au caillier ne veille,  
 Tant est eschaudée et batuë,  
 Qu'ele a bien autre rois véuë  
 Dont el s'ert espoir eschapée,  
 Quant ele i dut estre hapée  
 Par entre les herbes petites.  
 Ainsinc les vielles devant dites, 22310



Qui jadis ont esté requises,  
 Et des requeréors surprises  
 Par les paroles qu'eles oient,  
 Lêt les contenance que voient,  
 De loing lor aguez aparçoivent,  
 Par quoi plus envis les reçoivent ;  
 Oû s'ils le font néis acertes  
 Por avoir d'amor les desertes,  
 Comme cil qui sunt pris es las,  
 Dont tant sunt plesant li solas, 22320  
 Lêt li travail tant delitable  
 Que riens ne lor est si gréable  
 Cum est ceste esperance grieve  
 Qui tant lor plect et tant lor grieve,  
 Sunt-eles en grant sospeçon  
 D'estre prises à l'ameçon,  
 Et oreillent et estuidient  
 Se cil voir ou fable lor dient,  
 Et vont paroles sospesant,  
 Tant redotent barat presant, 22330  
 Por ceus qu'el ont jadis passés  
 Dont il lor membre encore assés.  
 Tous jors cuide chascune vielle,  
 Que chascun decevoir la vuelle.  
 Et s'il vous plect à ce flechir  
 Vos cuers por plus-tost enrichir,  
 Ou vous qui délit i savés,  
 Se regart au délit avés,  
 Bien poés ce chemin tracier  
 Por vous déduire et solacier. 22340  
 Et vous qui les jones volés  
 Que par moi ne soiés bolés,

Que que mes mestres me commant,  
 (Si sunt moult bel tuit si commant)  
 Bien vous redi por chose voire,  
 (Croie-m'en qui m'en voldra croire),  
 Qu'il fait bon de tout essayer  
 Por soi miex és biens esgaier,  
 Ausinc cum fait li bon lechierres  
 Qui des morsiaus, est congnoissierres 22350  
 Èt de plusors viandes taste,  
 En pot, en rost, en soust, en paste,  
 En friture et en galentine,  
 Quant entrer puet en la cuisine ;  
 Èt set loer et set blasmer  
 Liquex sunt dous, liquex amer,  
 Car de plusors en a goustés.  
 Ausinc sachiés, et n'en doutés,  
 Que qui mal essaïé n'aura,  
 Jà du bien gaires ne saura ; 22360  
 Et qui ne set d'honor que monte,  
 Jà ne saura congnoistre honte ;  
 N'onc nus ne sot quel chose est aise,  
 S'il n'ot avant apris mesaise ;  
 Ne n'est pas digne d'aise avoir,  
 Qui ne vuet mésaise savoir ;  
 Èt qui bien ne la set soffrir,  
 Nus ne li devroit aise offrir.

Ainsinc va des contraires choses,  
 Les une sunt des autres gloses, 22370  
 Et qui l'une en vuet définir,  
 De l'autre li doit sovenir ;  
 Ou jà par nule entencion  
 N'i metra diffinicion :

Car qui des deus n'a congnoissance,  
 Ja n'i congnoistra difference,  
 Sans quoi ne puet venir en place  
 Diffinicion que l'en face.

Tout mon harnois tel que le port,  
 Se porter le puis à bon port, 22380  
 Voldrai as reliques touchier,  
 Se je l'en puis tant aprouchier.  
 Lors ai tant fait et tant erré  
 A tout mon bordon defferré,  
 Qu'entre les deus biaux pilerés,  
 Cum viguerus et legerés,  
 M'agenoillai sans demorer,  
 Car moult oi grant fain d'aorer  
 Li biau saintuaire honorable  
 De cuer dévost et pitéable : 22390  
 Car tout iert jà tumbé a terre,  
 Qu'au feu ne puet riens tenir guerre,  
 Que tout par terre mis n'éust,  
 Sans ce que de riens m'i n'éust.  
 T'rais en sus ung poi la cortine  
 Qui les reliques encortine :  
 De l'ymage lors m'appressai  
 Que du saintuaire près sai ;  
 Moult le baisai dévotement,  
 Et pour estuier sainement, 22400  
 Voil mon bordon metre en l'archiere  
 Où l'escherpe pendoit derriere. }  
 Bien le cuidai lancer de bout.  
 Mais il resort, et ge rebout, }  
 Mès riens n'i vaut, tous jors recule,  
 Entrer n'i pot por chose nule,

Car ung palis dedans trovoi,  
 Que ge bien sens, et pas nel' voi,  
 Dont l'archiere iert dedans hordée.  
 Dès-lors qu'el fu primes fondée, 22410  
 Auques près de la bordéure  
 S'en iert plus fort et plus séure.  
 Forment m'i convint assaillir,  
 Sovent hurter, sovent faillir.  
 Se behorder m'i véssiés,  
 Por quoi bien garde i préssiés  
 D'Ercules vous péust membrer,  
 Quant il volt Cacus desmembrer.  
 Trois fois a la porte assailli,  
 Trois fois hurta, trois fois failli, 22420  
 Trois fois s'assist en la valée  
 Tout las por avoir s'alénée  
 Tant ot soffert paine et travail :  
 Et ge qui ci tant me travail,  
 Que trestout en tressu d'ançoisse,  
 Quant cest palis tantost ne froisse,  
 Sui bien, ce cuit, autant lassés  
 Cum Hercules, et plus assés.  
 Tant ai hurté, que toutevoie  
 M'aparçui d'une estroite voie 22430  
 Par où bien cuit outrepasser,  
 Mès convint le palis casser.

Par la sentele que j'ai dite  
 Qui tant iert estroite et petite,  
 Par où le passaie quis ai,  
 Le palis au bordon brisai.  
 Sui moi dedens l'archiere mis,  
 Mès ge n'i entrai pas demis.

Pesoit moi que plus n'i entroie,  
Mès outre pooir ne pooie ; 22440  
Mès por nule riens ne lessasse  
Que le bordon tout n'i passasse.  
Outre le passai sans demore,  
Mès l'escherpe dehors demore  
O les martelez rebillans  
Qui dehors erent pendillans.  
Et si m'en mis en grant destroit,  
Tant trovai le passage estroit ;  
Car largement ne fu-ce pas ;  
Que ge trespassasse le pas ; 22460  
Iét se bien l'estre du pas sé,  
Nus n'i avoit onques passé :  
Car j'i passai tout li premiers,  
N'encor n'ierent pas coustumiers  
Li liex de recevoir passage.  
Ne sai s'il fist puis avantage  
Autant as autres cum à moi,  
Mès bien vous di que tant l'amoï,  
Que ge ne le poi onques croire,  
Néis se ce fust chose voire ; 22 00  
Car nus de legier chose amée  
He mescroit, tant soit diffamée,  
Ne si ne le croi pas encores ;  
Mès au mains sai-ge bien que lores  
N'iert-il ne froès ne batus,  
Et por ce m'i sui embatus,  
Que d'autre entrée n'i a point  
Por le bouton cuillir à point.  
Li saurés cum ge m'i contins,  
Tant qu'à mon gré le bouton tins. 22470

Le fait orrés et la maniere,  
 Por ce que se mestier vous iere,  
 Quant la douce saison vendra,  
 Seignors Valets, qu'il convendra  
 Que vous ailliés cuillir les Roscs,  
 Ou les ouvertes, ou les closes,  
 Que si sagement i ailliés  
 Que vous au cuillir ne failliés.  
 Faites si cum vous m'orrés faire,  
 Se miex n'en savés à chief traire. 22480  
 Car se vous plus largetement,  
 Ou miex, ou plus sotivement  
 Poés le passage passer,  
 Sans vous destraindre ne lasser,  
 Si le passés à vostre guise,  
 Quant vous aurés la voie aprise.  
 Tant aurés au mains d'avantaige,  
 Que ge vous aprens mon usaige  
 Sans riens prendre de vostre avoir :  
 Si m'en devés bon gré savoir. 22490  
 Quant g'iere ilec si empressiés,  
 Tant fui du Rosier apressiés,  
 Qu'à mon voloir poi la main tendre  
 As rainsiaus por le bouton prendre.  
 Bel-Acueil por Diex me prioit  
 Que nul outrage fait n'i oit ;  
 Et ge li mis moult en convent,  
 Por ce qu'il m'en prioit sovent,  
 Que jà nule riens n'i feroie  
 Fors sa volenté et la moie. 22500

## CIX

La conclusion du Rommant  
 Est, que vous voyez cy l'Amant  
 Qui prend la Rose à son plaisir,  
 En qui estoit tout son desir.

PAR les rains saisi le Rosier,  
 Qui plus est frans que nul osier,  
 Et quant à deus mains m'i poi joindre,  
 Tretout soavet sans moi poindre,  
 Le bouton pris à eslocher,  
 Qu'envis l'êusse sans hochier. 22510  
 Toutes en fis par estovoir  
 Les branches croler et movoir,  
 Sans jà nul des rains depecier,  
 Car n'i voloie riens blecier :  
 Et si m'en convint-il à force  
 L'entamer ung poi de l'escorce,  
 Qu'autrement avoir ne savoie  
 Ce dont si grant desir avoie.  
 L'en la parfin tant vous en di,  
 Un poi de graine i espandi 22520  
 Quant j'oi le bouton eslochié  
 Ce fut quant dedens l'oi tochié,  
 Por les foilletes reverchier,  
 Car ge voloie tout cerchier  
 Jusques au fond du boutonet,  
 Si cum moi semble que bon est.  
 Si fis lors si meller les graines,  
 Que se desmellassent à paines,  
 Si que tout le boutonet tendre  
 En fis eslargir et estendre. 22530

Vez ci tout quanque g'i forfis ;  
 Mais de tant fui-ge bien lors fis,  
 C'onques nul mal gré ne m'en sot  
 Li dous, que nul mal n'i pensot :  
 Ains me consent et sueffre à faire  
 Quanqu'il set qui me doie plaire.  
 Si m'appelle-il deconvenant,  
 Que li fais grant desavenant,  
 Et sui trop outrageus, ce dit ;  
 Si n'i met-il nul contredit,  
 Que ne prengne, debaille, et coille  
 Rosiers et Rose, flors et foille.

22540

Quant en si haut degré me vi,  
 Que j'oi si noblement chevi,  
 Que mes procès n'ert mès dotable,  
 Por ce que fins et agréable  
 Fusse vers tous mes bienfaitors,  
 Si cum doit faire bons detors :  
 Car moult estoie à eus tenus,  
 Quant par eus iere devenus  
 Si riches, que por voir afiche,  
 Richece n'estoit pas si riche :  
 Au Diex d'Amors et à Venus  
 Qui m'orent aidie miex que nus,  
 Puis à tous les barons de l'ost,  
 Dont ge pri Diex que ja nes ost  
 Des secors as fins amoureux,  
 Entre les baisiers savoreus,  
 Rendi graces dix fois ou vint ;  
 Mès de Raison ne me sovint  
 Qui tant en moi gasta de paine,  
 Maugré Richece la vilaine

22550

22560



Qui onques de pitié n'usa,  
Quant l'entrée me refusa  
Du senteret qu'ele gardoit ;  
De cesti pas ne se gardoit  
Par où ge sui céans venus  
Repostement les saus menus,  
Maugré mes mortex anemis  
Qui tant m'orent arriere mis, 22570  
Especiaument Jalousie  
O tout son chapel de soussie,  
Qui des Amans les Roses garde :  
Moult en fait ores bonne garde.  
Ains que d'ilec me remuasse,  
(A mon voil encor demorasse)  
Par grant joliveté coilli  
La flor du biau Rosier foilli :  
Ainsinc oi la Rose vermeille,  
Atant fu jor, et ge m'esveille. 22580

Et puis que ge fui esveillie  
Du songe qui m'a traveillié  
Lèt moult i ai eu à faire  
Ains que ge pécusse à chief traire  
De ce que j'avoie entrepris :  
Mès toutevois si ai-ge pris  
Le bouton que tant desiroie,  
Combien que traveillié m'i soie,  
Et tout le solas de ma vie,  
Maugré Dangier et Jalousie, 22590  
Et maugré Raison ensement  
Qui tant me ledengea forment ;  
Mès Amors m'avait bien promis,  
Et ausinc me le dist Amis,

Se ge servioie loiaument,  
 Que j'auroie prochainement  
 Ma volenté toute acomplie.  
 Folz est qui en Dieu ne se fie ;  
 Et quiconques blasme les songes,  
 Et dist que ce sunt des mençonges, 22000  
 De cestui ne le di-ge mie,  
 Car ge tesmoingne et certefie  
 Que tout quanque j'ai récité,  
 Est fine et pure verité.

Explicit li Rommans la Rose  
 ♪ Oû l'art d'Amours est toute enclose :  
 Nature rit, si com moi semble,  
 Quant *hic* et *hec* joignent ensemble.

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LXXVIII. lines 15531-15656, Fr. 15429- 15558 . . . . .	5
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<p>Herein the Author doth disown, 'To save his honour and renown, Unseemly words, and prays that he May not be taken wrongfully.</p>	
LXXXII. lines 15883-15918, Fr. 15787- 15824 . . . . .	17
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<p>This tells how Nature, Goddess sweet,          Kneelt low at her confessor's feet;          Who gently bade her calm her fears,          Comfort her heart, and dry her tears.</p>	
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